Evaluation Study of Prince William County’s Illegal Immigration Enforcement Policy
FINAL REPORT 2010

Prepared by:

Thomas M. Guterbock
Director
Center for Survey Research
University of Virginia

Milton Vickerman
Department of Sociology
University of Virginia

Christopher S. Koper
Director of Research
Police Executive Research Forum

Bruce Taylor
NORC
(former Director of Research,
Police Executive Research Forum)

Karen E. Walker
Consultant

Timothy Carter
Department of Sociology and Program in Criminal Justice
James Madison University

Prepared for:
PRINCE WILLIAM BOARD OF COUNTY SUPERVISORS
Prince William County, Virginia
November 2010

CSR Project Number 08.017
Table of Contents

List of Figures ................................................................................................................ ....................... v
List of Tables ..................................................................................................................................... viii
Acknowledgments ................................................................................................................ ............... ix
Executive Summary ............................................................................................................................ xi

1. Introduction ................................................................................................................ ................. 1
  1.1. Background................................................................................................................ ......... 1
  1.2. Our Charge from the County........................................................................................... 3
  1.3. The Research Team ........................................................................................................... 4
  1.4. Research Questions and Methods ................................................................................... 5
      1.4.1. Quantitative Data Collection ................................................................................. 5
      1.4.2. Qualitative Data Collection .................................................................................. 7
      1.4.3. Data Analysis ......................................................................................................... 8
      1.4.4. Research Design Issues ....................................................................................... 8
  1.5. Structure of the Report ................................................................................................... .. 9

2. The Policy’s History ........................................................................................................ .......... 11
  2.1. Population Growth in Prince William County ............................................................ 11
  2.2. The Economic Downturn .............................................................................................. 15
  2.3. National and Local Efforts to Restrict Illegal Immigration ...................................... 16
  2.4. Participants in Crafting the Policy ................................................................................ 16
  2.5. The Initial June 2007 Immigration Enforcement Proposal....................................... 17
  2.6. Refining the Policy and General Order 45................................................................... 19
  2.7. The October 2007 Resolutions ...................................................................................... 21
  2.8. Further Modifications to the Policy and General Order 45.01................................. 22
  2.9. The Role of the Policy’s Opponents ............................................................................. 22

3. The Goals of the Immigration Policy, Possible Unintended Consequences, and Implementation Obstacles .................................................................................................................................... 24
  1.1 The policy’s goals .......................................................................................................... 24
  3.1. Possible unintended consequences of the policy ........................................................ 25
  3.2. Implementation obstacles ............................................................................................. 26

4. Criminal Justice Processing of Illegal Immigrants in Prince William County ............. 27
  4.1. PWPCD’s Immigration Enforcement Policy .............................................................. 27
  4.2. PWCPD Contacts with Suspected Illegal Immigrants, March 2008-December 2008 .......................................................................................................................... 30
  4.3. The Role of Magistrates and ADC in the Processing of Illegal Immigrants ............ 31
  4.4. PWC’s Handling of Illegal Immigrants in Comparison to Other Jurisdictions ...... 36
5. The PWCPD’s Experience Implementing General Order 45.01 ...................................... 39

5.1. Preparing for the Policy’s Implementation ........................................................................... 39

5.1.1. Policy Development ........................................................................................................ 39

5.1.2. Training .............................................................................................................................. 40

5.1.3. Establishing the Criminal Alien Unit ............................................................................. 40

5.1.4. Community Outreach ..................................................................................................... 40

5.2. Officers’ Views and Experiences with Regard to the Immigration Policy: Survey Results ............................................................................................................................... 42

5.2.1. Officers’ Knowledge of the Policy and General Views on the Policy ............................... 42

5.2.2. Officers’ Experiences with Implementing the Policy ...................................................... 43

5.2.3. Officers’ Perceptions of the Policy’s Impact on the Community and Police- Community Relations .......................................................................................................................... 46

5.3. Officers’ Views and Experiences with Regard to the Immigration Policy: Interview and Focus Group Results .......................................................................................................................... 47

5.3.1. Implementation Issues ........................................................................................................ 47

5.3.2. Effects on the Community and Police-Community Relations ........................................ 50

5.4. The Activities and Experiences of the Criminal Alien Unit (CAU) .................................... 52

5.5. Other Departmental Issues .................................................................................................. 54

5.5.1. Minority Recruitment ........................................................................................................ 54

5.5.2. Use of Language Translation Services ............................................................................. 55

5.5.3. Costs of the Policy ............................................................................................................ 56

5.6. Summary ................................................................................................................................. 56

6. The Experiences of the Judiciary, Jail, and ICE in Processing Illegal Immigrants in Prince William County ................................................................................................................................. 58

6.1. Magistrates and the Judiciary .................................................................................................. 58

6.2. The Prince William – Manassas Regional Adult Detention Center (ADC) ......................... 59

6.3. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency .......................................................... 60

7. Changes in the County’s Hispanic Population and the Number of Illegals ......................... 63

7.1. Changes in the County’s Hispanic Population ........................................................................ 63

7.2. Indicators of decrease in the number of illegal immigrants: data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey ................................................................................. 64

7.3. Informant reports about population changes ........................................................................ 72

7.3.1. Other indicators of population change ................................................................................ 72

7.4. By how much did the number of illegal immigrants decline? .......................................... 76

7.4.1. Why Did People Leave? .................................................................................................... 77

7.5. Summary ................................................................................................................................. 79

8. The Impacts of the Immigration Policy on Crime and Disorder in Prince William County 81

8.1. Background on Crime in PWC .......................................................................................... 81

8.2. Considerations in Assessing the Policy’s Impact on Crime and Disorder .......................... 84

8.3. Arrests of Illegal Immigrants ............................................................................................... 87
8.4. Time Series Analysis of Crime Reports and Calls for Police Service...............90
  8.4.1. Data and Methods ...................................................................................................90
  8.4.2. Results ...................................................................................................................91
8.5. Crime Victimization and Reporting by County Residents.............................95
8.6. PWC Crime Trends in Comparison to Other Jurisdictions ..............................96
  8.6.1. Trends in PWC and Manassas City .................................................................97
  8.6.2. PWC in Comparison to Other Northern Virginia Localities ......................98
  8.6.3. PWC in Comparison to Maryland Localities ..................................................100
  8.6.4. Summary of Comparisons ..............................................................................100
8.7. PWCPD Officers’ Perceptions of Crime and Disorder Problems and the Policy’s Effectiveness in Controlling Them .........................................................101
8.8. A Note on Traffic Violations .................................................................................103
8.9. Summary ..................................................................................................................104
9. The Policy’s Effects on Neighborhood Problems ..................................................107
  9.1. Results from informant and community interviews .........................................107
  9.2. Comments about policy implementation ..........................................................108
  9.3. Survey questions on neighborhood conditions ................................................109
  9.4. Day labor sites declined temporarily but are still active ...................................112
  9.5. Data from the Neighborhood Services Division ..............................................113
  9.6. Changes in complex households in the Hispanic communities ....................119
  9.7. Summary ..................................................................................................................121
10. The Policy’s Impact on Community Relations with the Police .............................124
  10.1. Overall Satisfaction with the Police .................................................................125
  10.2. Satisfaction with police implementation of the immigration policy ..............127
  10.3. Satisfaction with attitudes and behaviors of the police ....................................131
  10.4. Satisfaction with police fairness ........................................................................132
  10.5. Hispanic attitudes differ by language of interview ...........................................133
  10.6. Do community members understand the present immigration enforcement policy? 138
  10.7. Summary ..................................................................................................................141
11. Effects on the County’s Internal and External Reputation for Inclusiveness ........143
  11.1. Resident ratings of quality of life in Prince William County ..........................143
  11.2. Residents’ desire to live in Prince William County in the future ....................144
  11.3. Residents’ trust in County government ..............................................................145
  11.4. How were perceptions of Prince William affected, outside the County itself? 147
  11.5. Summary ..................................................................................................................151
12. Conclusions ...............................................................................................................153
  12.1. The implementation experience ......................................................................153
12.2. Reducing the number of illegal immigrants in the county..............................153
12.3. Improving public safety and reducing crime..................................................154
12.4. Reducing overcrowded housing problems, neighborhood nuisances and public disorder. ...............................................................................................................................155
12.5. Saving money by delivering fewer services to illegal immigrants..................156
12.6. Maintaining the Prince William County Police Department’s reputation for professionalism, and maintain community confidence and trust in police............156
12.7. Maintaining County’s reputation as an inclusive community, both internally (among its current residents) and externally (among people outside the County). ..........157
12.8. Did serious unintended consequences emerge?.............................................158
12.9. Implementation obstacles..................................................................................160
12.10. Some implications and open questions .........................................................160

APPENDICES (Bound separately)
Appendix A: Resolutions and General Orders
Appendix B: Survey of Washington, DC Area Law Enforcement Agencies Regarding Illegal Immigration and Local Immigration Enforcement
Appendix D: Time Series Data on Crime and Calls for Police Service
Appendix E: Time Series Model Details
Appendix F: Prince William County Zoning Ordinance
Appendix G: Summary of Methods, 2008 PWC Citizen Survey
Appendix H: Detailed Responses from 2008 Citizen Survey: Why Satisfied or Dissatisfied with the Police Policy?
Appendix I: Map of Public Use Micro Areas 501 and 502, representing Prince William County + cities
List of Figures

Figure 2-1. Growth in Proportion of Hispanic Population, by County, 2000-2007 .................................................. 12
Figure 2-2: Number of Building Permits Issued by Year ......................................................................................... 15
Figure 4-1. Locations where Illegal Immigrants were Arrested in PWC, and where they resided, 2009 .................................................................................................................................................. 32
Figure 4-2. Country of Birth for illegal immigrants arrested and placed on detainer by ADC, Jan-Sept 2010. ........................................................................................................................................ 33
Figure 4-3. Post-Arrest Processing of Suspected Illegal Immigrants by Magistrates and ADC. ...................... 34
Figure 4-4: Illegal Immigration Cases Handled by ADC ........................................................................................ 35
Figure 7-1. Hispanic Population Trend: PWC vs. DC metro area and balance of metro .......................... 64
Figure 7-2. Percent of Hispanics who are Non-Citizens, in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area and in Prince William County-Manassas-Manassas Park City .......................................................................... 65
Figure 7-3. Low English Proficiency of Hispanics, PWC and Rest of DC Metro ........................................ 66
Figure 7-4. Linguistic Isolation of Hispanics in PWC and Rest of the DC Metro Area .................................. 67
Figure 7-5. Usage of Telephonic Language Interpretation Service by PWC Police and Communications .................................................................................................................................................. 68
Figure 7-6. Decline in Male Hispanic Population, Aged 16-30: Washington, D.C. Metro Area and Prince William County-Manassas City-Manassas Park City ................................................................. 69
Figure 7-7. Population Pyramid for non-Hispanics, PWC 2006 ........................................................................ 70
Figure 7-8. Population Pyramid for Hispanics, PWC 2006. .............................................................................. 71
Figure 7-9. Population Pyramid for Hispanics, PWC 2009. ............................................................................ 71
Figure 7-10. Hispanic school enrollments, selected counties ..................................................................... 73
Figure 7-11. Growth in ESOL Population in PWC and Surrounding Communities, 1999-2009 ........ 74
Figure 7-12. Births to Hispanic women, PWC and other counties ................................................................. 75
Figure 7-13. Births to Hispanic women, small cities ..................................................................................... 75
Figure 8-1. Crime Rate in PWC, 2000-2009 (crimes per thousand). ............................................................. 82
Figure 8-2. Aggravated Assaults in PWC, 2005-2009. ..................................................................................... 83
Figure 8-3. Part I Violent Crimes in PWC, 2003-2009 (Weekly) ..................................................................... 92
Figure 8-4. Calls for Person Offenses in PWC, 2000-2009 (Weekly) .......................................................... 93
Figure 8-5. Aggravated Assaults in PWC, 2003-2009 (Weekly) .................................................................... 94
Figure 8-6. Trends in Victimization among PWC Residents by Ethnicity, 2008-2010 ............................ 96
Figure 8-7. Crime Reporting among PWC Residents by Ethnicity, 2008-2010 ........................................ 96
Figure 8-8. Map of the Washington, D.C. Region (from Singer et. Al, 2009) ................................................. 101
Figure 8-10. Hit and Run Accidents in PWC, 2004-2009 ............................................................................ 104
Figure 9-1. Annual Property Code Enforcement cases, PWC Neighborhood Services .......................... 114
Figure 9-2. Occupancy complaints by fiscal year, 2004-2010. ................................................................. 116
Figure 9-3. Location of PCE violations, 2005-2008.................................................................................. 117
Figure 9-4, Founded Neighborhood Services Complaints, 2005–2008.* ...................................................... 118
Figure 9-5. Complex households among Hispanics, PWC+cities and rest of metro area, 2005-2008. ............. 120
Figure 9-6. Complex households, West PWC+cities and East PWC, 2005-2008.............................. 121
Figure 10-1: Percentage of Survey Respondents who were Hispanic, by Year (unweighted data). 125
Figure 10-2: Satisfaction with Overall Performance of the Police Department by Race/Ethnicity, 2008................................................................................................................................... 126
Figure 10-3: Satisfaction with Overall Performance of the Police Department by Race/Ethnicity, 2010 ............................................................................................................................................. 126
Figure 10-4: Satisfaction with Overall Performance of the Police by Race/Ethnicity and by Year, 2000-2010 .................................................................................................................................................. 127
Figure 10-5: Satisfaction with the Job the Police Department is Doing in Carrying Out the Immigration Policy, 2010 (n=915) ................................................................. 128
Figure 10-6. Satisfaction with the Job the Police Department is Doing in Carrying Out the Policy by Race/Ethnicity, 2010 .......................................................................................................................... 130
Figure 10-7. Satisfaction with Police Attitude and Behaviors by Race/Ethnicity, 2010 ......................... 131
Figure 10-8. Satisfaction with Police Attitudes and Behaviors towards Citizens by Race/Ethnicity and by Year, 2000-2010........................................................................................................... 132
Figure 10-9. Satisfaction that the Police Department Treats Everyone Fairly Regardless of Race, Gender, Ethnicity, or National Origin, 2010 ................................................................. 132
Figure 10-10. Satisfaction that the Police Department Treats Everyone Fairly Regardless of Race, Gender, Ethnicity, or National Origin by Race/Ethnicity, 2010 ................................. 133
Figure 10-11. Satisfaction with police, by language of interview, 2007-2010............................................. 135
Figure 10-12. Hispanic satisfaction with policy implementation, by language group, 2007-2010. 136
Figure 10-13. Hispanic satisfaction with police attitudes, by language group, 2007-2010............... 137
Figure 11-1. Overall Quality of Life in Prince William County (on a 1-10 point scale, 1 is low), 2000-2010 ........................................................................................................................................... 144
Figure 11-2. Percentage of Respondents Who Would Like to Live in PWC 5 Years from Now, 2002-2010. ............................................................................................................................................... 145
Figure 11-3. Trust that the Government Will do What is Right (Always & Most of the Time), 2000-2010 ........................................................................................................................................... 146
Figure 11-4. Percent of owner-occupied home purchase loans to Hispanics for 1 to 4 family dwellings and manufactured homes: PWC, Manassas City, and Manassas Park City .... 148
Figure 11-5. Percent Hispanic home purchase loans, PWC + cities, 2006.................................................. 149
Figure 11-6. Percent Hispanic home purchase loans, PWC + Cities, 2007 ................................................... 150
Figure 11-7. Percent of home loan applications from Hispanics in Prince William, Manassas and Manassas Park, 2000-2007
### List of Tables

Table 2-1: Prince William County Population 1960–2006 ............................................................... 11

Table 4-1. Circumstances of PWCPD Contacts with Suspected Illegal Immigrants, July 2008-June 2010 .......................................................................................................................... 30

Table 5-1. PWCPD Officers’ Knowledge and Implementation of the Current Immigration Policy. ........................................................................................................................................ 43

Table 5-2. PWCPD Officers’ Estimates of Persons They Questioned About Immigration Status .... 44

Table 5-3. Officer Perceptions of General Order 45.01 .................................................................. 45

Table 5-4. Officers’ Overall Experience with the Policy ................................................................. 45

Table 5-5. Officers’ Perceptions of the Policy’s Impact on PWC’s Immigrant Population .......... 46

Table 5-6. Frequency with which Officers Witnessed Problems between Police and the Community (1=never, 2=occasionally, 3=often, 4=regularly/all the time) ........................................................................... 47

Table 8-1. Arrests of Illegal Immigrants in PWC for Uniform Crime Reports Part I Crimes ....... 88

Table 8-2. Arrests of Illegal Immigrants in PWC for Other Selected Crimes ............................ 88

Table 8-3. Trends in Arrests of Illegal Immigrants, 2008-2009 ................................................... 89

Table 8-4. Pre and Post-Policy Percent Changes in Crime Reports and Calls for Police Service, 2003-2009 (Crime Reports) and 2000-2009 (Calls for Service) ................................................................. 91


Table 8-6. Frequency with which Officers Witnessed Crime and Disorder Problems (1=never, 2=occasionally, 3=often, 4=regularly/all the time) ........................................................................... 102

Table 9-1. How big are these problems? 2009, 2010 survey results ............................................. 110

Table 9-2. Did problems get better or worse? 2009, 2010 surveys .............................................. 111

Table 9-3. Occupancy complaints, 2004-2010 .......................................................................... 115

Table 10-1. Reasons for Satisfaction with the Job the Police Department is Doing in Carrying out this Policy (2010, n=394) ........................................................................................................ 129

Table 10-2. Reasons for Dissatisfaction with the Job the Police Department is Doing in Carrying out this Policy (2010, n=113) .................................................................................................. 130

Table 10-3. Hispanic satisfaction with police items, by language of interview, 2010 ............... 134
Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of the many people who helped us collect and analyze the information on which this report is based. First, we would like to acknowledge the Prince William County Police Department, which funded the study. We are grateful for the support that Chief Charlie T. Deane has given from beginning to the end of the project. Mr. Tom Pulaski was our primary point of contact for the project at PWCPD, and we thank him for his patience and for coordinating many of the research activities with police personnel. Deputy Chief Barry Bernard was instrumental in helping us obtain detailed reports and learning to interpret the data correctly. We thank Master Police Officer Bill Anzenberger for coordinating activities associated with the officer surveys and discussions with ICE personnel, Major Amanda Lambert for arranging our visit to the detention center, Carole Moye who provided us with ADC data, and Mr. Tim McCormack for providing access to police department databases. Deputy Chief Barry Barnard and Assistant Chiefs Steve Hudson and Ray Colgan reviewed the draft report and provided useful information and corrections. Our draft reports also received very helpful feedback from County Executive Officer Melissa Peacor, Deputy County Executives Susan Roltsch and Chris Martino, County Attorney Angela Horan, Budget Director Michelle Casciato, Director of the Neighborhood Services Division Patricia Reilly, and Public Information Officer Jason Grant.

Many people in Prince William County willingly shared their insights and thoughts with us, participating in interviews and focus groups and filling out surveys. Those people include about 375 Police Department personnel, five County Supervisors, other local government staff, employees of health institutions serving institutions in the county, faith-based leaders in the community, and other stakeholders. In addition, over 1,000 County residents participated each year in the Prince William County Citizen’s Survey. We thank them all.

At the University of Virginia, Dr. Abdoulaye Diop and graduate assistants Jennifer Jones and Natalie Brown assisted greatly in the preparation of our Interim Report of September 2009. Ms. Kathleen Coker coded responses from the Citizen Survey, and helped with final editing of both the interim and final reports. Ms. Nicole Fedoravicius assisted with Spanish language interviewing and analysis of Spanish language materials throughout the project. Graduate assistants Katherine Asbury, Claire Terni, Elizabeth Kaknes, and J. Clayton Ford assisted in the data collection, preparation of graphs and tables, and assembly and editing of the final report. Our understanding of U.S. Census data sources was greatly aided by Achsah Carrier and Susan Klapp of the Demographics and Workforce Division at the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, where Mike Spar provided us with background on population estimates. Ila Crawford, CSR Fiscal Technician, was responsible for administering the UVa portion of the contract and the UVa subcontracts with PERF and James Madison University.

At the Police Executive Research Forum, Daniel Woods, Bruce Kubu, Nathan Ballard, Anthony Bellero, Brandon Gustafson, and Mary Martinez assisted with data collection, analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, survey development and administration, and various other research and administrative tasks.

The views and interpretations in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of Prince William County’s elected leaders, the County’s Executive Management, the Police Department, or any other unit of County government.

The Center for Survey Research is responsible for any errors or omissions in this report. Questions may be directed to the Center for Survey Research, P.O. Box 400767, Charlottesville Virginia 22904-
CSR also may be reached by telephone at 434-243-5222; by electronic mail at surveys@virginia.edu, or via the World Wide Web at: http://surveys.virginia.edu.
Executive Summary

Evaluation Study of Prince William County’s Illegal Immigration Enforcement Policy

Final Report

This is the final report of a three-year, interdisciplinary evaluation study of the illegal immigration policy in Prince William County that was adopted by resolution by the Board of County Supervisors in October 2007, amended in April 2008, and implemented in its current form in July 2008. This evaluation study was approved by the Board at the time the policy was passed into law, and it was funded by the County Police Department. In this report we recount some of the events leading up to and surrounding the implementation of the policy, identify the policy’s goals, and then proceed to assess whether or not the policy met each of its goals over the years since its inception. We also investigate whether the policy has had any of the negative consequences that some had predicted would result from it. We have used a variety of resources and research methods in conducting our research, including both qualitative and quantitative data sources, and information supplied by the County police and government offices as well as information from independent sources. We conclude that the Prince William Immigration policy was smoothly implemented by the Prince William County Police Department and County staff; that the policy had wide-ranging effects, some of which were those intended; and that it also fell short of achieving some of its goals.

Methods

The research team, a collaboration between researchers at the University of Virginia, the Police Executive Research Forum, and James Madison University, analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data on the police and the community. This triangulation of methods strengthened our ability to learn about and understand the effects of the policy.

Our quantitative data sources included data from the Prince William County Police Department, including crime statistics, data on arrests of illegal immigrants, data on calls for service, and crime data from the department’s records management system. We also analyzed published crime data from other jurisdictions in the metropolitan area. We conducted two anonymous surveys of the County’s police officers, and analyzed data from the annual community surveys conducted by telephone each year by the University of Virginia Center for Survey Research. We also surveyed other police departments in the metropolitan area about their immigration enforcement practices. From the U.S. Census Bureau we accessed not only information from the decennial census, but also results of the 2006 through 2009 American Community Surveys, and the more detailed Public Use Micro Sample derived from those surveys.

Our qualitative data sources included focus groups with police officers at various levels, and key informant interviews with members of the County Board, key County staff, and community leaders on all sides of the immigration issue. We also conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with community residents, some recruited through our informants and others selected at random from among those who had been interviewed in the 2009 and 2010 community surveys. Many of these interviews were with Hispanic residents and some were conducted in Spanish. In addition, we observed staff at the local jail while they did their work, sat in on officer training for the new policy,
talked with members of the Criminal Alien Unit, and conducted day and evening “ride-alongs” with patrol officers.

**The Policy’s History**

The Hispanic population of Prince William County grew very rapidly, increasing by over 150 percent from 2000 to 2006. It is not known what proportion of these new residents were in the U.S. without legal authorization, but the number of illegal immigrants in the County definitely increased during these years. Starting in 2006, there was increasingly vocal concern among some residents about neighborhood problems and certain kinds of crime that they associated with the presence of illegal immigrants. These concerns resulted in action by members of the County Board. The first resolution concerning illegal immigrants was introduced in July 2007. After a period of study and vigorous public debate, the Board passed into law the initial version of the illegal immigration policy in October 2007. In addition to denying some specific county services to illegal immigrants, the initial policy required police officers to inquire about the citizenship or immigration status of any person they detained (including traffic stops) and for whom there was probable cause that they were not legally in the country. After police officers had been trained in the policy, it was put into effect in March of 2008. However, in a pivotal move the Board amended the policy in April 2008, changing it to read: “Officers shall investigate the citizenship or immigration status of all persons who are arrested for a violation of a state law or county ordinance when such arrest results in a physical custodial arrest.” Proponents of this change, including the Chief of Police, argued that the amended policy would reduce the risk that police officers would be accused of racial profiling. Officers were retrained, and the amended policy was implemented in July 2008. It remains in effect today.

**The Policy’s Goals**

Our analysis of the policy process and our interviews with those who advocated, created, implemented, and modified the immigration policy yields the following list of six goals that the Prince William County immigration enforcement policy was designed to achieve:

1) Reduce the number of illegal immigrants in the county;
2) Improve public safety and reduce crime;
3) Reduce overcrowded housing problems, neighborhood nuisances and public disorder, such as loitering at day labor sites and public intoxication;
4) Save money by delivering fewer services to illegal immigrants;
5) Maintain the Prince William County Police Department’s reputation for professionalism, and maintain community confidence and trust in police;
6) Maintain County’s reputation as an inclusive community, both internally (among its current residents) and externally (among people outside the County).

Our evaluation was also attentive to the following possible, adverse consequences that could have occurred. The policy might:

A) Facilitate overzealous or inappropriate enforcement actions by police;
B) Generate a flood of costly litigation against the Police Department and the County government;
C) Overburden the Police Department to the point of reducing its effectiveness;
D) Generate administrative costs far greater than anticipated at the time of adoption;
E) Create fear and a sense of being unwelcome among immigrants in general;
F) Cause legal immigrants, or Hispanics generally, to leave the county; and
G) Result in lower crime reporting from the Hispanic community, or even increase their victimization.

We also looked at possible obstacles to the policy’s success, such as limits on the capacity of the criminal justice system to handle an increased flow of detainees. However, we found that most of these negative consequences did not occur and that the obstacles to implementation were fairly minor or temporary.

**Contacts with illegal immigrants**

From March 2008 through June 2010, PWCPD officers had 2,984 contacts with suspected illegal immigrants; 79 percent of these contacts were associated with an arrest. These arrests represent about six percent of all arrests in the County. Nearly all suspects thought to be illegal immigrants were later confirmed as such. The great majority of the illegal immigrants arrested were from Latin American countries. During the same period, the Adult Detention Center (a joint jail facility that serves Prince William County, Manassas, and Manassas Park and began its own 287(g) program in July 2007) checked the immigration status of 9,284 foreign-born arrestees, many of whom were, of course, legally present in the U.S. The ADC issued immigration detainers for about 30 percent of these. From July 2007 to June 2010, the ADC turned over a total of 2,499 illegal immigrants to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement [ICE]. We have no specific figures on how many of these were deported or released back to the County by ICE.

Our survey of other jurisdictions in the metropolitan area reveals that Prince William’s immigration enforcement policy is not entirely unique, since several other jurisdictions do check the immigration status of persons they send to jail. However, the County’s policy of checking the immigration status of all arrestees is more comprehensive than those of other jurisdictions that do immigration checks.

**PWCPD’s experience implementing the current policy**

The Police Department prepared extensively for implementation of the original immigration policy, trained all its officers thoroughly on the original and amended policies, and invested great effort into educating the public about how the policy was being implemented. Our surveys of officers show that they feel well trained and equipped to deal with immigration checks, and are comfortable implementing the policy. The Criminal Alien Unit has played an important, specialized role, focusing on proactive investigation of more serious offenders in coordination with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement [ICE]. Although implementation of the policy placed additional burdens and costs on PWCPD, especially on the command staff, the agency seems to have adapted well to these demands.

Police personnel believe that the policy initially caused fear in the immigrant community, undermining the immigrant community’s trust of the Department. However, they also feel that their outreach efforts have helped to ease these fears; they regard problems with police-community relations as only occasional. Fears that the policy would hurt minority recruitment efforts or increase racial bias complaints have not been realized.
We found that coordination of the Police Department’s efforts with the magistrates, the ADC staff, and ICE have all gone fairly smoothly. In the early stages of the program, slow follow-up by ICE did exacerbate crowding conditions at the ADC, increased the number of ADC inmates sent to other regional and local jails (known as “farm-outs”) and caused an increase in the average length of an inmate’s stay at the ADC. However, this issue was resolved in 2008 through a Memorandum of Agreement between ICE and ADC, and ICE agents now pick up (or allow the release) of immigration cases from the ADC within 48 hours. Although the 287(g) process for checking immigration status of arrestees is sometimes time-consuming, the process seems to work fairly smoothly. In October of 2009, ICE renegotiated its 287(g) agreements with Prince William and other localities that participate in this partnership program, placing closer limits on the types of cases for which ICE would take custody. However, this change has not had much effect on the policy’s operations at the ADC, because staff there had already been informally prioritizing detainers so as to turn over only the more serious cases to ICE.

**Changes in the County’s Hispanic population and the number of illegals**

It is challenging to determine whether the County’s illegal immigrant population decreased after the policy was introduced, since no official statistical source actually counts illegal immigrants (other than the Police Department’s records of persons arrested post-policy). It is also difficult to disentangle effects of the policy from the effects of the economic downturn that occurred at nearly the same time. Despite these challenges, the data suggest that the policy resulted in some important changes in the community.

Growth in the County’s Hispanic population suddenly leveled off. While Prince William County accounted for most of the growth in the metropolitan area’s Hispanic population from 2000 to 2006, since the policy’s introduction nearly all Hispanic growth in the metro area has occurred outside of Prince William.

The number of non-citizens in the County decreased substantially (by about 7,400 persons in two years).

Using a series of proxy measures (such as limited English proficiency, number of young Hispanic males) that all point in the same direction, we are also able to conclude that the number of illegal immigrants was significantly reduced. We estimate that this number decreased by an amount between 2,000 and 6,000 persons from 2006 to 2008. We believe that both the policy and the changing economy contributed to this decrease, but the immigration policy surely played a role because the rate of changes in these same proxy measures is so much smaller elsewhere in the metropolitan area.

The Hispanic population of the County was restructured, as unattached young adults (mostly male) left and were replaced by Hispanic couples, somewhat older adults, and families with small children, all more likely to be English speakers.

**Impacts on crime and disorder**

We find that the policy has not affected most types of crime in Prince William County, in large part because illegal immigrants account for only a small percent of arrests overall and a small to modest share of offenders for most types of crime. About seventy percent of arrests of illegal immigrants were for just three specific offenses: public drunkenness, driving while intoxicated, and driving
without a license. However, there was a substantial drop in aggravated assaults following the announcement of the policy and the initiation of immigration checks at ADC in July 2007. (Using a time-series analysis of weekly crime data from the PWCPD records management system, we can identify with some precision when the decrease in aggravated assaults occurred.) Because of this drop, the index of violent crimes also went down. We attribute the reduction in violence primarily to the publicity surrounding the adoption of the policy in its original form, but we caution that some of this drop may also have been due to a reduction in reporting of assaults by illegal immigrants (and perhaps legal immigrants as well). Our annual community surveys do not show any change in crime reporting by Hispanic residents, but police officers and community members tell us that crime reporting is still an issue for immigrants because of fears associated with the County’s policy.

Property crimes and most crimes of public disorder do not appear to have been affected by the policy. However, there was an affect on one type of traffic offense: hit-and-run accidents in Prince William went down by nearly half between 2006 and 2008, and this change can reasonably be attributed to the introduction of the policy.

Despite these mixed findings, the policy in its current form (mandating immigration checks only for arrestees) appears to be a reasonable way of targeting illegal immigrants who are serious offenders—a policy goal on which there is broad agreement.

**Effects on neighborhood problems**

The implementation of the County’s immigration enforcement policy did have significant effects on some of the neighborhood problems that had been of concern to activist groups and to members of the Board when they framed the policy. However, some of the effects proved to be temporary and others were apparent in some parts of the County but not in others. Survey respondents are divided on the severity of neighborhood problems and the degree to which they have improved or worsened. We attribute this partly to differences in where respondents live, as each of the problems was highly localized.

Prior to the policy’s implementation, there was a significant problem of overcrowded housing in the County, associated with the increasing presence of illegal immigrants but localized in a few areas. We have strong, clear reports from some informants that particular overcrowded houses became vacant or changed to normal occupancy very soon after the policy was passed.

There were more complaints and founded violations of overcrowding and related property violations in the areas near Manassas than in the Eastern portion of the County. Perhaps as a result, there is evidence that overcrowded housing (or housing that may appear overcrowded to some residents even if it is not in violation of code) was reduced in the area around Manassas but did not decrease in the Eastern part of the County.

Prior to the introduction of the policy there were several active day labor sites that caused concern or apprehension for some residents. There are consistent reports in our qualitative data that loitering at day labor sites went down sharply when the policy was first implemented, but then returned to significant levels of activity at the sites within a year or so. Our direct observation and interviews with police officers in the fall of 2010 verified that the day labor sites in the County continue to be quite active.

Vacant housing became a major neighborhood issue at around the time the resolution was implemented, in part because of the mortgage crisis. Responses to the annual citizen survey, as well as
reports of informants, show that the problems with upkeep of vacant properties have lessened significantly in the last year.

There was a marked increase in the capabilities of the Neighborhood Services Division to guide and respond to complaints from residents about Property Code Enforcement issues. As a result, the Division’s caseload of complaints did not recede as the policy was put into effect, but continues at a high level. Prince William County is now far better equipped than it was earlier in the decade to work with neighborhood groups to identify and correct problems in property code enforcement and to handle the increased, continuing caseload.

**Saving money by delivering fewer services to illegal immigrants**

Most of the more costly social services that are delivered to residents by the Prince William County government are federally funded or regulated. Some must, by Federal law, be delivered without regard to immigration status; others (such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Foot Stamps and Medicaid) have already been restricted at the Federal level from being delivered to illegal immigrants. Therefore, the County’s October 2007 resolution covered only a small list of services, such as homeless intervention, that would be newly denied to illegal immigrants. We did not undertake to measure the cost savings from these changes, but it is clear that they are not very large. The County shifted any savings so realized to services from the same agencies for citizens and legal immigrants.

**Community relations with the police**

The data from our annual community surveys reveal that the introduction of the policy in 2007-2008 seriously disrupted police-community relations in the County, at least temporarily. When the policy was introduced and implemented, new and substantial gaps in satisfaction emerged between Hispanics and non-Hispanics in overall satisfaction with the police, satisfaction with the attitudes and behavior of officers, satisfaction with police fairness, and satisfaction with police efforts to enforce the immigration policy itself. The Police Department invested substantial effort in explaining the new policy and attempting to reassure members of the Hispanic community. It is likely that the damage to community relations would have been considerably greater, and more permanent, without these efforts. However, they were not sufficient to prevent a palpable chill to fall over police-community relations in 2008, as seen not only in our survey results but in the everyday experiences of police officers, reported to us in the 2008 focus groups and in some of the responses to our surveys of officers.

The good news is that the chilly relations with Hispanics warmed fairly rapidly. There was measurable improvement in 2009, and by 2010 Hispanic satisfaction with the overall performance of police equaled the satisfaction of non-Hispanics. On more specific questions about police attitudes and behaviors and about police fairness, a significant ethnic gap in satisfaction remained, but the gap regarding police attitudes had narrowed considerably from what was seen in 2008.

Through further analysis of the survey data and our in-depth interviews with some community residents, we found that the group that is most dissatisfied with the immigration policy is those Hispanics who do not speak English well. These County residents are far less satisfied than English-speaking Hispanics with particular aspects of police performance that are related to the immigration issue. Our qualitative interviews also reveal that many residents, especially Hispanics and even more so the less acculturated Hispanics, do not understand the current immigration policy. Further and
continuing effort will be required to get correct information out to the Hispanic community and to fully restore their confidence in the Prince William County police to the levels maintained before 2007.

The County’s internal and external reputation for inclusiveness

The County’s adoption of its immigration policy had a strong, immediate impact on the way Hispanic residents perceived their life in the County, their desire to continue to live in the County, and their trust in the County government. On several of these indicators, Hispanics had been more positive than non-Hispanics prior to 2006. In each of these, dramatic and unprecedented ethnic gaps emerged in 2008 that separate the views of Hispanics from those of non-Hispanics, whose views of the County were generally unaffected by the immigration controversy. In the two years that followed, these ethnic gaps were largely repaired, disappearing entirely for quality of life ratings and the desire to continue living in the County. The ethnic gap in government trust lingers on in 2010, but is not as wide as in 2008.

We have no direct opinion data on how Hispanics outside Prince William view the County, but data on Hispanic population trends in the metropolitan region as well as mortgage data from the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act show that Hispanics are avoiding Prince William County in favor of moving to other parts of the region. Thus, the County did not initially succeed in its goal of implementing the immigration enforcement policy without damaging its reputation as an inclusive community. For Hispanic residents within the County, ratings of quality of life and desire to continue living in the County rose sufficiently by 2010 to match the sentiments of non-Hispanic residents. So, the County had by 2010 achieved a measure of success in restoring its internal reputation as a welcoming place for Hispanics—that is, its reputation among Hispanics who live in Prince William. However, the data on Hispanic growth outside Prince William—and the relative lack of Hispanic growth within Prince William—suggest that there is much work to do if more Hispanics outside the County are to be convinced that they will be welcome in Prince William.

Unintended negative consequences and obstacles

We found no evidence of overzealous or inappropriate immigration enforcement actions by police. The flood of costly racial-profiling litigation that some had feared—under both the original and the current policy—never materialized. Another concern was that the Police Department might be overburdened to the point of reducing its effectiveness. While the burden of implementing and continuing the policy has been considerable, the Department has accommodated well to these demands and there is no evidence that its effectiveness has been hampered. We also did not find that the costs of the policy were widely different than those that the Police Department anticipated—and the County budgeted for—at the time of the policy’s adoption.

It does seem that the policy, at least at first, created fear and a sense of being unwelcome among immigrants in general, and it seems to have caused some legal immigrants, or Hispanics generally, to leave or avoid the County. We have dealt with this issue above, in connection with our evaluation of the inclusiveness goals of the County’s policy implementation.

On the issue of whether or not the policy has seriously reduced crime reporting by immigrants or by Hispanics generally, our evidence is mixed. Our community survey shows no changes from 2008 to 2010 in reported victimization of Hispanics or in the percentage who report crimes they have been victims of, nor does it show lower reporting rates for Hispanics than for non-Hispanics. On the other hand, we do not have data to assess before and after changes in crime reporting by Hispanics,
nor do we have specific data on reporting of crime by illegal immigrants. Some police officers express concern that crimes against illegal immigrants are less likely to be reported, and the department knows of specific crimes in the Hispanic community that were not reported to the police. The Police Department should certainly continue to encourage reporting by all residents and to emphasize their policy of not inquiring about the immigration status of those who are victims or witnesses to crimes.

Most of the possible obstacles that could have hindered successful implementation of the policy relate to issues of capacity. As has been noted, there was some initial strain on jail capacity in the early months, before a more streamlined coordination arrangement was worked out with ICE for prompt transfer of detainees. Other than that, the police department (with the additional resources provided by the Board of County Supervisors), the judicial system, the jail, and ICE have all been able to handle the steady flow of illegal immigrants who are arrested and the somewhat smaller number who are placed on detainer.

Overall conclusions and implications

Our overall conclusion, again, is that the Prince William immigration policy was smoothly implemented; that the policy had wide-ranging effects, some of which were those intended; and that it also fell short of achieving some of its goals. Some of the intended effects which were achieved were a reduction in the number of illegal immigrants in the County, a reduction in some specific categories of crime, but not in crime overall; and some amelioration of neighborhood problems, at least in parts of the County. The County was not able to implement the policy without creating a serious ethnic gap in perception of the police, ratings of the County as a place to live, and trust in the local government; Hispanic opinions on these matters plunged to unprecedented lows in 2008. This pattern emerged despite extensive efforts by the senior staff of the Police Department to educate the public about the policy through community meetings and media appearances. Fortunately, these ethnic gaps were largely—but not completely—repaired by 2010, with Hispanic residents currently showing satisfaction with the police and with the County as a place to live that equals that of non-Hispanics. It appears, however, that Hispanics elsewhere in the metropolitan area are not eager to move to Prince William, as its Hispanic growth rate continues to lag far behind that of the rest of the metropolitan area. It is also clear that many residents still do not understand the amended immigration enforcement policy.

One implication of Prince William’s experience is inescapable: it is indeed possible for a local government to have an impact on its experience with illegal immigration, despite the national scope of the problem and the primacy of the Federal government in dealing with the issue.

The pattern and timing of change we have observed on several key indicators suggests that the impact of the policy on the Prince William community stemmed in large part from the very public controversy that accompanied its introduction, passage, and later modification. The irony is that the outcry about the policy and the fears of harassment and profiling that were aroused in the immigrant community were based on the original, ‘probable cause’ version of the policy, which was in effect in Prince William for only two months. The current policy, mandating immigration inquiry only upon arrest, was put into effect in July 2008 and remains in effect today. It is not clear that this latter policy would have raised the same level of concern if it had been proposed at the outset. If, accordingly, there had been less outcry and less arousal of fear, then it is doubtful that the police activities in identifying and detaining illegal immigrants arrested for crimes would, in themselves, have made nearly as much difference.
There are thus three circumstances that make the Prince William experience fairly unique and warrant caution from anyone who seeks to generalize the outcomes seen here to other jurisdictions. As we just noted, Prince William started with a highly controversial policy and then quickly switched to one that was somewhat less far-reaching, less controversial, and presented less possibility that allegations of racial profiling would arise. Second, the County has a highly professional and well-resourced Police Department that enjoyed continuity of its strong and effective leadership throughout our study period. Third, the immigration policy was implemented concurrently with drastic changes in the economy, the housing market, the construction industry, and mortgage finance. We are convinced that the effects of the policy in Prince William cannot all be attributed wholly to these economic factors, but it is not at all certain that the effects would have been as far-reaching if the economic circumstances had been less dire. For these reasons, the lessons of Prince William’s experience should be applied with great caution to other places in other times.

The views and interpretations in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of Prince William County’s elected leaders, the County’s Executive Management, the Police Department, or any other unit of County government.
Evaluation Study of Prince William County’s Illegal Immigration Enforcement Policy

Final Report

1 Introduction

This is the final report of a three-year, interdisciplinary evaluation study of the illegal immigration policy in Prince William County that was adopted by resolution by the Board of County Supervisors in October 2007, amended in April 2008, and implemented in its current form in July 2008. This evaluation study was approved by the Board at the time the policy resolution was passed, and it was funded by the County Police Department. The policy is controversial for a number of reasons, one of these being that it directly involves local police officers in some aspects of the enforcement of national immigration laws, a responsibility that has traditionally been carried out only by federal agencies. In this report we recount some of the events leading up to and surrounding the implementation of the policy, identify the policy’s goals, and then proceed to assess whether or not the policy met each of its goals over the years since its inception. We also investigate whether the policy has had any of the negative consequences that some had predicted would result from it. We have used a variety of resources and research methods in conducting our research, including both qualitative and quantitative data sources, and information supplied by the County police and government offices as well as information from independent sources. We have enjoyed the full cooperation of our sponsors and they have given us complete freedom to reach our own conclusions as social scientists. We released an Interim Report1 about the policy in August 2009; most of the tentative conclusions we reached at that stage of our research have proven to be valid as we now evaluate them against the full range of data now available, covering a longer period of time. But we also have reached some new conclusions and have been able to answer many of the issues that were necessarily left unresolved in our Interim Report. We conclude that the Prince William Immigration policy was smoothly implemented by the Prince William County Police Department and County staff; that the policy had wide-ranging effects, some of which were those intended; and that it also fell short of achieving some of its goals.

1.1 Background

In July 2007, the Board of County Supervisors in Prince William County, VA unanimously passed the first of several resolutions designed to provide a local solution to growing illegal immigration among the county’s residents. That resolution required the County staff to withhold as many County services as possible from illegal immigrants. It also required the police to inquire into a person’s immigration status during all detentions, including traffic stops, if an officer had probable cause to believe that the person might be in the United States illegally. The immigration enforcement policy was passed into law in October 2007, but was then significantly amended in April of 2008 to require only that persons placed under arrest be checked on their immigration status. That policy has been in operation in the County since July of 2008.

The county, which by 2000 had already transitioned from a rural, exurban area into a highly developed suburban county and the third most populous jurisdiction in Virginia, was one of the fastest growing counties in the country during the early 2000s. The Hispanic population grew especially quickly, more than doubling in just 7 years, from about 27,000 to over 64,000 people.

Population growth and shifts in the county led to significant changes in the county’s quality of life. Traffic congestion became a major problem as the county became Washington’s most populous outer suburb. The make-up of schools and neighborhoods changed markedly: Between 2000 and 2008, 26 elementary schools experienced tremendous growth in their English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). In those schools, the ESOL population jumped from less than 30 students to more than 30% of the total school population. In 17 schools, the ESOL population increased to over 40% of the school population; in several cases the schools experienced a doubling or tripling of the ESOL population in just 8 years. In some cases, the ESOL population was more than 60% of the schools’ total population. As immigrants moved in, they engaged in behaviors that immigrants have long used in order to establish a foothold in the United States: They shared housing with relatives, friends and strangers in order to make ends meet. As a result, parking spaces on neighborhood streets became difficult for long-term residents to find. In addition, some of the immigrants were single men who shared houses; frequented day labor sites, staying for much of the day if they did not get work; and consumed alcohol, sometimes becoming drunk in public. Unlike cities with long histories of absorbing large numbers of immigrants, Prince William County was unprepared in some ways to manage these changes.2

By 2007, an unknown number of immigrants were in the County illegally. Our estimate is that they numbered in the tens of thousands, out of a total resident population of 360,000. As housing overcrowding, school overcrowding loitering and other quality of life issues grew, illegal immigrants became the focus of some of the county’s native-born Americans’ anger, who believed that if illegal immigrants did not live in Prince William County, the problems would decrease. These residents had watched other local jurisdictions experience failure in their attempts to control the quality of life problems that they attributed to illegal immigration. In nearby Manassas City, council members attempted to restrict the number of related people who could live in the same house, an effort that was rescinded a month after it was passed. They had also seen efforts to control illegal immigration by fining employers and landlords who rented to illegal immigrants run into trouble in the courts. To avoid these problems, those who wished to curtail the number of illegal immigrants in the county hoped to deny County services to all illegal immigrants and to use the police to check immigration status and detain illegal immigrants.

The resolution that passed in July of 2007 was just the opening for an extended series of discussions among the Board of County Supervisors, County staff, residents and the Prince William County Police Department [PWCPD]. The various parties attempted to identify a strategy that would respond to resident concerns, comply with the law and not increase the County’s risk of lawsuits, ensure continued community support for the Police Department’s efforts to promote public safety and reduce crime, and not redirect too many police resources from the Department’s core policing mission. In March 2008, PWCPD implemented General Order 45, which mandated that police inquire about the immigration status of all detainees if there was probable cause to believe that the person was not in the United States legally.

In late April 2008, the Board passed an amended resolution, which mandated that police inquire into the immigration status of all people who were physically arrested instead of all detained persons for

---

whom there was probable cause to inquire, although officers could still use their discretion to question people who they had detained. This change was a pivotal moment in the history of the policy, because it greatly lessened the risk that racial profiling might occur, or appear to occur (thus generating unfounded lawsuits), in the implementation of the policy. In July 2008, PWCPD implemented the revised policy in the form of General Order 45.01, to comply with the April resolution. In addition, the Police Department entered into a 287(g) agreement with the federal government, which allowed specially trained officers to act as immigration enforcement officers. These officers focused primarily on people who had committed serious crimes. The agreement also mandated that the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) would remove arrestees who had federal immigration warrants for their detention from the county’s jail. The police practices that ensued from the policies were in marked contrast to the Police Department’s previous practice regarding suspected illegal immigrants, which was “to call ICE based on the priority of seriousness of local charges” against detainees.3

1.2 Our Charge from the County

As part of the policy’s implementation, the Police Chief requested and the Board of County Supervisors unanimously approved funds to conduct an evaluation of the policy that had three major goals:

Goal 1: Provide information about the policy’s implementation

The new policy has few counterparts in other locales, and little information exists about how to best implement such policies. Although one can expect challenges when implementing new policies, the exact nature of those challenges—and the potential solutions to them—depend on the capabilities of the local community’s political dynamics, economic conditions, and other social and cultural factors. Prince William County has a large Police Department, with over 550 officers, and putting the policy in place was a major task. In order to do so, the Police Department designed a training curriculum for all patrol officers and created a Criminal Alien Unit to identify illegal immigrants who committed serious offenses. It also needed to educate a wary public about the scope of the policy. This evaluation attempted to identify specific challenges encountered by the PWCPD and their potential solutions.

Goal 2: Provide information about the policy’s potential effects on the community and police services in Prince William County

The Police Department wanted to better understand the policy’s effects on the Department and the community. The police, County staff and community members had many hypotheses about what the original policy’s effects might be, but no one was exactly sure what and how extensive the effects would be. As we shall see throughout this report, the policy appeared to have some of the effects desired by its proponents or intended by the Board, although it also appeared to have some of the unintended effects that others had predicted or no effects on some conditions. This evaluation therefore examines a range of questions related to the policy’s hypothesized effects through the analysis of crime data, criminal arrests, resident use of and satisfaction with social services, citizen complaints, traffic infractions, crime victimization, property code enforcement records and other data sources.

Goal 3: Provide a blueprint for future research and data collection by the Prince William County Police Department

3 Deane (2007a, June 15).
Prior to the policy’s implementation, the Police Department, like most police departments across the country, did not collect systematic information on immigration status. The policy’s supporters believe that the lack of information prevented the County from effectively addressing illegal immigration. Also, the Police Department and evaluation team recognized that lack of information presented inherent challenges in determining if observable changes were due to the policy or other community conditions. Throughout our work we have consulted closely with the senior staff of the Police Department to discuss what records are available, to request new or modified reports, and to show them the utility of some external sources of data that have turned out to be relevant to understanding the broader effects of the immigration policy. We believe the range and quality of data we have pulled together in the course of our investigations is unprecedented for an evaluation of this kind.

1.3 The Research Team

To carry out the research, the Police Department contracted with the Center for Survey Research (CSR) at the University of Virginia, which has conducted a resident satisfaction survey of Prince William County residents since 1993 and has extensive trend data from these surveys going back more than 17 years. In addition, the evaluation required researchers with expertise in a variety of methods and substantive areas, and CSR coordinated the overall team. The Police Executive Research Forum (PERF, a non-profit organization that provides technical assistance and research support to major police departments across the country) participated in the project via a sizable subcontract with the University. A separate subcontract engaged the services of James Madison University.

At the University of Virginia, Dr. Thomas M. Guterbock, a survey methodologist with background in community sociology, oversaw the project. Having directed the County’s annual community surveys since their inception in 1993, Guterbock had extensive knowledge of resident opinions in Prince William. Dr. Karen Walker, an evaluation researcher, and Dr. Milton Vickerman, an immigration researcher, were responsible for the design, implementation and analysis of the portion of the study that relies on intensive interviews with key informants and with randomly selected community members. Staff members at the UVa Center for Survey Research coordinated the annual resident survey and provided analyses of the survey’s trend data. Ms. Nicole Fedoravicius conducted interviews with Spanish-speaking residents in Prince William County. Dr. Christopher Koper and Dr. Bruce Taylor4 from The Police Executive Research Forum were responsible for the survey and interviews of Police Department personnel, interviews of other criminal justice officials (including representatives of ICE), the analysis of the Police Department’s calls for service and crime data, and the survey of police departments in other jurisdictions. At PERF, Daniel Woods worked on the processing and analysis of PWCPD’s automated records on crime reports and calls for service, while Bruce Kubu assisted with the development, implementation, and analysis of the PWCPD officer surveys and the survey of police agencies in the metropolitan area. Dr. Tim Carter, a criminologist from James Madison University, consulted in the design of the crime analysis efforts, drawing on a variety of available data sources.5

---

4 Since summer of 2010 Dr. Taylor has been employed at the Washington office of NORC, but he continued to assist with the project through the end, while Dr. Koper took the primary role on the project at PERF.

5 Others who assisted with the project are credited in the acknowledgements at the beginning of this document.
1.4 Research Questions and Methods

In asking how effectively the Prince William County Police Department was able to implement the County’s new policy of working with ICE to enforce federal immigration law, our interim report examined three major research questions that addressed the first two goals of the evaluation overall.

- What are the Police Department’s experiences in implementing the policy?
- What affect, if any, does the new policy appear to have on other areas of the Department’s policing?
- What affect, if any, does the new policy appear to have on members of the Prince William County community?

The interim report, based on information collected through 2008, covered the policy’s history from the policy’s initial introduction in a Board of County Supervisors meeting through its first 9 months of enforcement. It also provided information about Prince William County that is pertinent to the policy’s history and that provides a context for interpreting post-policy police and community data.

This final study report is conceived as a stand-alone document; we do not assume that the reader has reviewed the Interim Report. A key step in formulating this presentation of our findings is our development of a clear listing of the policy’s goals as well as some key, possible unintended consequences that also needed to be evaluated. We have organized this report around an assessment of each of these policy goals and possible consequences, which we lay out in section 3 below.

There are, however, some important limits to the scope of our inquiry. We have focused primarily on the aspects of the policy that involve the Police Department. We did not undertake to evaluate directly the provisions of the policy that deny specific County services to illegal immigrants. Our focus is on the experience of the Police Department in carrying out the policy, the effects of the policy on crime and policing in the community, and on effects on the community (such as changes in attitudes toward the police) that could directly affect crime and policing. Since alleviation of certain neighborhood problems was one of the policy’s goal areas, we also consider whether these problems got better or worse. However, we do not attempt to gauge the broader economic impacts of the policy on residents or on businesses (if any); nor have we been able to gain any comprehensive or close-up picture of how the everyday lives of illegal immigrants might have been changed by the policy. In fact, because of strict human subjects research protections in place at the University of Virginia, we were not permitted in this research to ask any County resident about his or her immigration status.

The research team analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data on the police and the community. This triangulation of methods strengthened our ability to learn about and understand the effects of the policy.

1.4.1 Quantitative Data Collection

PWC Police Department data – Our team worked with the Prince William County Police Department to access the Department’s existing crime statistics for the years prior to the implementation of the policy.

---

6 To learn more than we have here about the illegal immigrants’ views and experiences would have required a quite different, more ethnographic research strategy. It would be important to the success of such an effort to have funding for the work from a source independent of the County Police Department.
immigration policy as well as for the years post-implementation. For this report we include summary data on PWCPD Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data, PWCPD data on arrests of illegal immigrants, and our own analysis of trends in calls for service to PWCPD over ten years [CFS data]. We also conducted time-series analyses of UCR data and arrests for the last seven years, as recorded in the Police Department’s Record Management System [RMS data].

Published data from other police departments. We used data published by the FBI in the Uniform Crime Reports of the United States to compare Prince William’s crime statistics with those of other localities in the Washington metropolitan area. We also examined similar crime reports published by the Metropolitan Council of Governments (COG) and a compendium of crime statistics entitled Crime in Virginia, published by the Virginia State Police, to compare the County to other jurisdictions in the Virginia portion of the metro area.\(^7\)

PWC Officer survey – We fielded a self-administered, anonymous survey with all sworn officers of the PWCPD during October and November 2008, and then repeated the procedure in late 2009. The timing of the first survey allowed our team to assess the officers’ experiences with both the initial policy, General Order 45 (implemented in March 2008), and the revised policy, General Order 45.01 (implemented in July 2008). The second survey focused exclusively on the revised policy. Police Department staff distributed the surveys at roll calls, and officers were requested to return a completed survey in a sealed envelope within two weeks. Although the surveys were fully anonymous, we used a system of numbered stickers and sealed envelopes that allowed us to preserve anonymity while linking each officer’s first and second survey responses.

The officer survey contained a series of mostly closed-ended questions (with a small number of open-ended items). Questions were grouped by topic in four sections:

- Knowledge of immigration policy and implementation
- Officer behavior related to the current immigration policy
- Problems observed by officers since the current immigration policy went into effect in July 2008
- Officer perspective on General Order 45 (probable cause standard)

Community survey. Our team added to the 2008 PWC Citizen Survey\(^8\) a set of questions related to the implementation of the PWC immigration policy, including items on community attitudes towards the new policy, police fairness, victimization and reporting of crime to the police. The community survey is administered in the summer months by telephone each year (in both English and Spanish) to a large, county-wide sample of residents. Recent surveys have included calls to cell phone users. The team used pre-existing questions in the survey to examine residents’ experiences with the police, feelings of safety in their neighborhoods and their ratings of the county’s overall quality of life. In 2009 a new set of questions was added, asking about specific neighborhood problems such as loitering and overcrowded housing; these were repeated in the 2010 survey.

---

\(^7\) Because of various issues in data comparability and consistency, we have not included data from COG or Crime in Virginia in this report.

\(^8\) This study series has always been titled as the Prince William County Citizen Survey. It includes in its study population all adult County residents, regardless of citizenship or immigration status, and does not ask respondents about either status. To avoid misunderstanding about the survey’s scope, we refer to these annually recurring telephone surveys as the community surveys in this report.
EVALUATION OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Survey of other metropolitan police departments. In late 2009 and early 2010, PERF conducted a survey of all other police jurisdictions in the metropolitan area, asking for details about their immigration enforcement practices and policies, their perceptions of whether crime rates are linked to the presence of illegal immigrants, and for reports of certain recent crime statistics. Forty-six departments responded, representing about two-thirds of the targeted jurisdictions.

U.S. Census data. In addition to gathering reports from the published data tables of the decennial census, we have made considerable use of a newer Census product, the detailed social and demographic data reported annually from the American Community Census for large jurisdictions since 2006. Fortunately, Prince William County is large enough that its ACS results are reported by the Census Bureau annually. Unfortunately, this is not the case for Manassas, Manassas Park and some of the other smaller jurisdictions in the metropolitan area. We have also been able to make good use of the Public Use Micro Samples that are derived from the ACS. These are anonymized databases of individual records from the ACS survey, allowing the researcher to build custom reports on combinations of variables. In this data source, Prince William’s data are combined with those from Manassas and Manassas Park; data for the balance of the metro region can also be accessed for comparison.

1.4.2 Qualitative Data Collection

While our quantitative data is useful for identifying trends over time in police data, area demographics, and community attitudes, we also collected a variety of qualitative data to better understand implementation of the policy and its effects on residents and their neighborhoods. The qualitative data provide context to aid in our interpretation of our quantitative data. Qualitative data are particularly useful for understanding processes (such as implementation of new policies and protocols) because they permit researchers to probe in greater detail than is possible in surveys. We collected the following qualitative data:

Focus groups – Focus groups are an effective way of listening to people and learning from them. They can provide insight into how a group thinks about an issue, the range of opinions and ideas, and the inconsistencies and variations of ideas among a group. Our team worked with PWCPD to set up focus groups with PWC police officers, held in County buildings in the summer of 2008. We also conducted focus groups with command staff and with other specialized units in PWCPD, notably the Criminal Alien Unit and the Human Resources staff. These focus groups elicited police attitudes toward the PWCPD immigration policy and assessments of its impact with questions that were retrospective as well as covering the situation at the time. Each group lasted about two hours in duration. Our team took extensive notes and analyzed the results for each individual group as well as conducting a macro summary analysis across all the groups. The series of police focus groups was repeated in summer of 2009.

Key informant interviews – The evaluation team conducted key informant interviews with a number of the community stakeholders, including local magistrates, ICE agents, ADC commanders and 287(g) officers, County supervisors, senior County staff members, and community leaders from faith-based institutions and advocacy organizations. These interviews provided us with individual perspectives and permitted us to collect politically sensitive information that provided important insights and background information. For example, our interviews with ICE agents that work in the Prince William County area helped us assess the impact of the police immigration policy on ICE’s resultant response capabilities and efficiency. In all interviews, we offered to withhold the names of those whom we interviewed, and some asked that we do so. Others said that we were welcome to use their names and quote their views, and we have done so in parts of this report.
Semi-structured community interviews — In summer of 2008, we enlisted the aid of community and church leaders to arrange one-on-one interviews with local community residents. We used a protocol of prepared questions and topics, and the interviews were tape recorded, transcribed, and analyzed with the aid of qualitative data analysis software that facilitates retrieval of text material by topic or theme. Some interviews were conducted in Spanish. In 2009 and 2010, we changed our recruitment strategy and recruited two small samples from among community survey respondents who had agreed in their initial telephone interview to be re-contacted. We sampled 16 respondents, including some Hispanics, from the 2009 survey. A second sample of 18 respondents, all Hispanics, were interviewed individually in 2010 using a protocol that focused more narrowly on residents’ views of the police and understanding of the immigration policy. In addition, we conducted focus groups in September 2010 with two groups of Hispanics recruited out of the 2010 community survey sample; one group was conducted in English and one in Spanish. These group sessions were focused on understanding of the policy and assessment of communications about the policy with the Hispanic community.

Observations — The evaluation team worked with PWCPD to gain access to the arrestee screening and processing system in the County jail. Our team conducted observations of the screening process, with a special focus on the handling of detainees with non-resident alien status. We also observed the 287(g) interviewing process, as well as conducted interviews with the jail officers. The research team also conducted a series of “ride-alongs” with PWCPD officers to observe the implementation of the new policy in a field setting across the range of police shifts and service areas in the County.

1.4.3 Data Analysis

Our analyses of the quantitative data involved mostly univariate statistics describing the key analytic variables over time. However, we also conducted some more technically sophisticated trend analyses of the PWCPD calls for service data and the incident report data from the RMS.

Analyses of the qualitative data first focused on identifying the range of responses and the key issues that people raised in focus groups and interviews with officers, departmental representatives and citizens. These early analyses consisted of mostly thematic and content analyses and were very descriptive in nature. Later analyses of the qualitative data focused on examining the policy’s implementation in greater detail and on using the qualitative data to assist in the interpretation of quantitative data. In conducting our analyses of focus groups, interviews and observations, we used qualitative data analysis software (i.e., NVivo) to organize our field notes. With one or two exceptions, we did not transcribe interviews or focus groups, but instead used researcher-generated field notes and summaries of all interviews and focus groups. (The 2010 semi-structured interviews were transcribed.) The NVivo qualitative analysis software permitted our team to search across multiple documents for key themes, generate cross-tabs to examine the frequency with which certain themes emerged, and link documents that, together, describe events, activities or topics of interest.

1.4.4 Research Design Issues

While our study design has generated a wide range of rich and informative data, our ability to draw strong inferences from these data, especially regarding questions about cause and effect, is somewhat restricted because of limitations in the study’s design and the kinds of data that are available. It is an inescapable fact that the illegal immigrant population is hidden from official view and is present in most data sets only in an ‘invisible’ form. That is, illegal immigrants, when they are counted, are counted in a way that does not allow them to be identified in the data. Systematic baseline information about illegal and legal immigrants’ attitudes and practices is unavailable; public service institu-
tions have avoided asking about immigration status because they worry that asking such questions will deter people from seeking services that they need. For this particular evaluation, the lack of baseline information on a key variable means that assessing change over time in demographic patterns, behaviors and practices is challenging.

One way that evaluators often address this type of challenge is to use comparison or control groups. A control group, however, requires an experimental design—infeasible in this case. And comparison group designs can be difficult when the comparisons are between communities (in this case counties) where the number of factors that may affect the outcomes of interest (in this case citizen and police attitudes and practices) is very large and dynamic, and includes such things as county or state policies, shifts in public attitudes, economic changes, and crime or drug epidemics that may be unrelated to the policy of interest. Despite these concerns, we did undertake data collection of limited amount of data from other police departments in the DC Metropolitan area. We also make frequent comparisons of Prince William to some of its neighboring jurisdictions, to the balance of the metropolitan area, or to the balance of the Virginia portion of the metro area. Although county comparisons are able to provide some insight into the effects of Prince William County’s immigration enforcement policies, caution must be used in interpreting these results to avoid making mistaken attributions.

To address these methodological concerns we have adopted a multi-method approach, involving many sources of different types of data. By drawing on a blend of both quantitative and qualitative traditions in our study, each approach informs the other and allow for triangulation of data sources and methods. When multiple sources of varying types of data reveal similar findings, confidence in the validity of the findings grows exponentially.

### 1.5 Structure of the Report

In Section 2, we describe the political and social dynamics that led to the Board of County Supervisors’ decision to restrict services to illegal immigrants and mandate that the Police Department conduct immigration status checks. That section also describes how the County police and staff developed workable procedures to carry out the Board’s mandates.

Section 3 discusses and lists the various goals of the County’s immigration policy, lists some key unintended consequences that might have resulted from the policy, and identifies a few of the possible obstacles to the policy’s successful execution. The remainder of the report is devoted to evaluation of the Police Department’s experience in carrying out the policy, assessment of whether the policy’s several distinct goals were realized, and consideration of whether the unintended negative consequences actually emerged.

Section 4 provides a description of criminal justice processing in Prince William County over time—prior to the initial policy, after the first policy (General Order 45) and after the revised policy (General Order 45.01). Sections 5 and 6 examine the policies’ implementation in detail. The focus in these sections is assessment of the implementation process itself, and consideration of some of the obstacles that implementation might have faced. Section 5 investigates the experiences that the Police Department had in training its officers, implementing the policies, and communicating the policies’ intent to the public. This section also considers the costs of the implementation. Section 6, in turn, examines how Prince William County magistrates and other officials, including personnel from US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) of the Department of Homeland Security, worked with the Police Department and jail staff to enforce immigration law. These sections rely on documents about the policies, including the Board of County Supervisors’ resolutions, the Police
Department’s policies and training materials, and presentations and letters to the Board. They also rely on interviews and focus groups with County staff, including police department personnel, and other community stakeholders, as well as the results of our two anonymous surveys of the police officers.

In sections 7 through 11 we turn to our assessments of whether each of the policy’s main goals was met. Section 7 examines a variety of data sources and proxy measures to determine whether the number of illegal immigrants in the County was reduced by the policy. This section also examines ways in which the demographic structure of the County’s Hispanic community changed after the policy’s introduction.

In section 8 we turn our attention to analyzing the policy’s effects as these relate to public safety and the Police Department. This section uses quantitative information from the Police Department (including calls for service data and Uniform Crime Reports data) to focus on an analysis of trends in crime and calls for service to examine whether or not the policy may have contributed to change in either.

Section 9 looks at neighborhood problems such as overcrowded housing, loitering, and property upkeep to see if these were ameliorated by the introduction of the policy. A variety of indicators and data sources are used, especially data from our interviews, the community surveys, and statistics reported by the Division of Neighborhood Services.

Because the Police Department assumes that good policing requires strong police-community relations, section 10 draws on data from the annual community surveys to investigate the effects that the policy may have had on those relations. This section benefits greatly from the fact that we have on hand survey data collected in years prior to the policy’s introduction, allowing real assessments of attitude changes for various subgroups of County residents. These results relate to the County’s goal of implementing the policy in a way that would maintain the reputation of its Police Department for professionalism and fairness.

Section 11 considers possible effects of the policy on the County’s reputation as an inclusive community. This section uses results of the annual community surveys to examine how Prince William County and its government are perceived by Hispanics (and others) who live in the County. Again, data from years before the policy’s introduction are compared to data from the most recent years. This section also uses data on demand for home mortgages from Hispanics, and Hispanic population trends in the region, to gain some insight into how Hispanics in other parts of the metropolitan region view Prince William as a possible place to live.

We summarize our overall conclusions in section 12, and briefly consider some of the implications of our findings. As already noted, we conclude that the Prince William Immigration policy was smoothly implemented by the Prince William County Police Department and County staff; that the policy had wide-ranging effects, some of which were those intended; and that it also fell short of achieving some of its goals.

---

9 One goal, that of saving money by denying services to illegal immigrants, was not directly investigated in this research and is therefore not treated in a separate section of the report.
2 The Policy’s History

To comprehend how the County’s immigration enforcement policy was formulated, it is necessary to understand the policy’s genesis in Prince William County’s population growth, the effects of that growth, and the increased visibility of immigrants within the county. It is also important to understand the national political climate, and the way in which the immigration debate was framed.

Disentangling the initial motivations of the policy is challenging because several groups of people took part in shaping the policy over time, and those people had different ideas for what the policy should accomplish. In their interviews, people attributed diverse motivations to those who proposed, modified, passed, and then amended the policy. Some of those descriptions agreed with the descriptions provided by the key actors themselves; others did not. Also, a few key actors expressed multiple—occasionally contradictory—motivations.

2.1 Population Growth in Prince William County

The one part of the policy’s history that seems clear is that it grew out of change in Prince William County. For many years, much of the county had been a rural area beyond the boundaries of Washington, D.C.’s suburbs. It surrounded the city of Manassas in its northwest section and included a stretch of the Interstate 95 corridor in its southwest section, where some modest D.C. suburbs existed. As Washington and its inner suburbs became increasingly expensive and pressure for housing grew, housing developments and shopping areas sprouted in Prince William County.

Table 2-1: Prince William County Population 1960–2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total population Count</th>
<th>% Hispanic</th>
<th>% Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>50,164</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>111,102</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>144,703</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>215,686</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>280,813</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 (est.)</td>
<td>357,503</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2-1 shows the county’s growth since 1960, before the Interstates were built. With population growth came increased population diversity. The county’s African-American population grew notably between 1970 and 2000. Growth in the Hispanic population came later, starting in the 1990’s, then accelerating, and almost doubling in percentage terms between 2000 and 2006.10

10 U. S. Census Bureau (1960–2000). U. S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2007). Prior to the 2000 U.S. Decennial Census, respondents were only able to select a single race. In both the 2000 Decennial Census and the 2005–2009 American Community Survey, however, respondents could be categorized as being of “two or more races.” When reporting information for these recent surveys, our table includes only the total population of blacks in PWC who selected being “black or African American alone.” In the 2000 Decennial Census, an additional 10,178 respondents from PWC (3.6% of the population) selected being of “two or more races;” they are not represented in this table. Similarly, 9,217 respondents (2.6% of the population) in PWC selected being of “two or more races” in the 2005–2007 American Community Survey; they are also not represented in this table.
The growth in the Hispanic Population in Prince William County significantly exceeded the growth in the Hispanic population in surrounding counties between 2000 and 2006, as indicated in Figure 2-1 below.

**Figure 2-1: Growth in Proportion of Hispanic Population, by County, 2000-2007**

![Graph showing the growth in proportion of Hispanic population by county from 2000 to 2007.](image)

Historically, the County has been largely successful in integrating and accepting the diverse newcomers. This is evidenced in the results of the Center for Survey Research’s annual Citizen Survey conducted for the County since 1993. These surveys ask residents for their overall rating of the quality of life in the county and their desire to live there in the future. Historically, African-Americans consistently gave the county high marks on these measures that almost equaled the scores given by white residents. Until recently, Hispanics also gave good ratings to the county as a place to live. Prof. Vickerman carried out a detailed study of the racial experiences of African-American residents of Prince William just a few years ago. His interviews with African-American residents revealed that, overall, black residents, who were comfortable to affluent, enjoyed living in the county because of its quality of life (e.g., services and physical beauty). Most had moved there because of a combination of this quality of life and (at the time) lower real estate prices compared to surrounding counties. (The presence of the Quantico Marine base was another factor drawing blacks to the area.)

We do not wish to paint an overly rosy picture of race relations in the county, however. In their interviews, African American residents also reported continued racial discrimination (though not only in Prince William but throughout the region), such as recurring negative racial experiences on the job, while shopping and, more rarely, with neighbors. It is fair to say, however, that Prince William County has not had a history of unusual racial or ethnic animosity in recent decades.

---

11 Data come from 2000 Census and 2009 ACS data comparison tables.
12 Vickerman (2007).
The county was one of the fastest growing counties in the nation in the 2000–2007 period, with a 28.3% population increase. Further, almost two-thirds of that growth was in the immigrant population, both naturalized citizens and non-citizens (which includes people who are legally in the country as residents or on work visas and those who are in the country illegally).

Fast growth inevitably produces strains as counties find that their infrastructure and social services must be expanded. In Prince William, previously rural roads became congested, schools were full and time on sports fields in the county was at a premium. Additional tensions arose as the Hispanic population grew, increasing from under 10% of the population in 2000 to over 19% of the population in the 2005–2007 period. In addition, 54% of immigrants living in PWC in 2006 were from Latin America, a dramatic rise from the 28% in 2000.

Population growth also affected the schools. In addition to almost 50% growth in the absolute number of students in the school district, which rose from 50,000 to 73,000 between 1998 and 2007, the number of students with limited English proficiency rose from 1362 to 13,404, an almost tenfold increase. The proportion of all PWC students who had limited English proficiency rose from 3% to 18%, making foreign language speaking students a much more visible part of the school population. Much of the growth in foreign language students was among the Hispanic population.

It is important to note that the growth in the Hispanic population occurred unevenly across the county and was particularly strong in the areas around Manassas and Woodbridge. As a result, certain neighborhoods experienced a great deal of change, whereas others experienced far less. For example, in 2000, one elementary school had a population that was over 40 percent Hispanic (43%), and four others had populations between 30 and 38 percent Hispanic. In 2007, seventeen schools had populations that were over 40 percent Hispanic—half of those had student enrollments of 50 percent or more Hispanic. Almost all those schools were located near or in Manassas and Woodbridge.

Therefore, although population growth in general was perceived as a challenge for the county, for some PWC residents the larger problem was the influx of immigrants that had produced new social problems and cultural clashes in their neighborhoods.

The policy was initiated by the elected leadership in response to a growing chorus of community concerns expressed in citizens’ time and probably in direct email with Board Supervisors about some community conditions that were viewed as detrimental by most folks here in the county, and those included things like residential overcrowding, a very large number of vehicles associated with one address and parked all over the place, including front lawns, a deterioration of property standards—some of which were violations of our property code; some of which were representatives of cultural differences—such as chickens in the back yard, which clearly is [also] a violation—a different approach to outdoor activity, things being stored outside, vehicles being parked on the lawn, parties…involving music and drinking late at night…and there were some vehicular accidents linked back to illegal immigrants.

Craig Gerhart, Former County Executive

---

Our neighborhoods were being overrun by Hispanics who were buying houses and moving 10 gentlemen in, parking on the lawns, there were gangs, and the politicians were responding to the community.

In PWC, there was a lot of growth, a lot of building going on, and so there were a lot of laborers here in order to build those houses...And it wasn’t one family per house, one mom, dad, children—it was 10 men, 10 cars and drinking all night and being disruptive in a quiet neighborhood.

Former PWC Resident who Works in the County

There had been some efforts to deal with problems associated with illegal immigration—major overcrowding. And there were attempts in Manassas city to do something to address this and the result was that...advocacy groups—all pretty much from outside—descended on City Hall to prevent them from taking any action to prevent overcrowding...—there was a great amount of frustration—[the Manassas residents] felt under-armed and ill-prepared to deal with the issues—not only did the residential overcrowding continue but it got worse and worse and worse. As the influx continued, there was massive immigration—people having their parked cars hit by someone who doesn’t have a drivers’ license and doesn’t speak English, illegal immigrants who had committed crimes, it raised people’s consciousness.

Greg Letiecq, President, Help Save Manassas

Advocates against the policy, in contrast to those who supported it, did not think that housing overcrowding was responsible for the policy.19

People welcome diversity in moderation, and we think this particular group was uncomfortable with the changing demographics here and were looking to drive people away.

Nancy Lyall, Mexicans Without Borders

Similarly, during a focus group a few patrol officers indicated that after the policy went into effect they saw evidence that some supporters of the policy viewed it as a way of ridding their neighborhoods of Hispanics in general and not just illegal immigrants. It is not uncommon to see conflicts develop in urban neighborhoods between ethnic or racial groups with differing lifestyles as they compete for jobs, living space and arenas for cultural expression. For some of the residents involved, ethnic and language differences can become a symbol of competing interests and definitions of community boundaries. These processes can develop in changing suburban neighborhoods as easily as they do in the city neighborhoods that urban sociologists have so richly described in the past (for example, Hunter 1974, Suttles 1972).20 In fact, research in both Europe and the United States has shown that anti-immigrant sentiment tends to be greater (among the dominant groups) in

---

19 It is difficult to know to what extent overcrowded housing existed in the county. According to federal housing estimates, the number of housing units in Prince William County grew from 98,000 to 134,000 between 2000 and 2007, a 37% increase. The average number of people per unit actually declined from 2.8 people to 2.6 people. These figures, of course, do not account for illegal immigrants, for which there is no good estimate, but if we assume that illegal immigrants added an extra 40,000 to the county’s population, the average number of people per housing unit would only have risen to 3 people. It is likely that overcrowding was less of a problem than indicated, but that there were some visible cases that affected people’s perceptions.

20 Hunter (1974); Suttles (1972).
areas where there are large numbers of immigrants and/or when these groups perceive an increase in the size of minority groups in their areas.21

2.2 The Economic Downturn

Although not yet obvious, an economic slowdown began to be felt in Prince William County by 2006, which may have contributed to the policy’s genesis. The number of construction permits issued each year, which had grown dramatically in the county between 2000 and 2005, began to fall precipitously in 2006, as Figure 2-2 indicates.

Figure 2-2: Number of Building Permits Issued by Year

Along with the decline in construction permits came a decline in the number of construction jobs. These economic pressures may have contributed to the dissatisfaction over illegal immigration in Prince William County. As the number of construction jobs fell, work for day laborers probably diminished, and the day labor sites, where primarily Hispanic men congregated, may have had more

21 McLaren (2003); Alba et al (2005); Berg (2009). Recent research by Berg (2009) has shown that core networks mediate conflicts between whites and immigrants, either strengthening or weakening them. Specifically, participation by white Americans in tighter or older core networks is associated with less tolerance for immigrants, while involvement in educated networks, or those involving non-whites, correlates with greater tolerance toward immigrants.
people standing around for longer portions of the day. In addition, as employment became tighter in the county, native-born residents may have become increasingly resentful of people who were being hired when they were in the country illegally. Although these pressures may have been present in surrounding counties, several factors probably ignited the debate around illegal immigration in Prince William County.

2.3 National and Local Efforts to Restrict Illegal Immigration

Tensions in Prince William County over undocumented immigrants reflect broader tensions nationwide, as these immigrants have increasingly moved to non-traditional destinations. One aspect of this demographic shift, resulting from efforts in the early 1990s to close the nation’s southern border, has seen undocumented immigrants move to such upper Midwestern and western states as Iowa, Nebraska, Arizona and Colorado. An even more pronounced movement has been occurring along the eastern seaboard, with states in that part of the country—especially in the South—reporting significant spikes in their Hispanic populations. For instance, between 1990 and 2005 the number of Hispanics in Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Tennessee increased by over 200 percent. Maryland, South Carolina, and Virginia registered an increase of between 100 and 200 percent.22 The other relevant aspect of the recent wave of Hispanic migrants is that many are increasingly bypassing cities and going directly to suburbs.23 Northern Virginia, in general, and Prince William County in particular, are examples of this trend.

A national political debate has grown over how to address problems perceived as arising from the growth in immigration. In the national debate, groups critical of immigration—notably the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR)—argue that competition from illegal immigrants hurts American workers and businesses and that immigrants are straining local school and human services budgets. For FAIR and these other groups, immigration needs to be reduced and illegal immigration, especially, needs to be halted. In contrast, groups sympathetic to immigrants argue that American employers are partially responsible for the growth in immigration because they hire immigrants for jobs that native born Americans will not take. This debate has resulted in a number of local strategies, ranging from attempts to provide sanctuary to illegal immigrants to attempts to remove them from communities.

Prior to the actions taken by the Prince William Board of County Supervisors, efforts had been made in other northern Virginia communities to restrict illegal immigration. The Town of Herndon had attempted to prevent day laborers from congregating, and it established a 287(g) agreement with the Federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) in 2007. The Manassas City Council (Manassas is an independently governed city surrounded by Prince William County) passed a resolution in December 2005 that restricted extended families from living in one home in order to address what its advocates saw as overcrowding in homes that was above legal limits. After widespread questions about its legality and strong advocacy from Mexicans Without Borders and a fair housing organization, the Council rescinded its policy in January 2006.

2.4 Participants in Crafting the Policy

As with all public policies, a range of people were involved in crafting and presenting the policy to the Prince William Board of County Supervisors. Among the key players were citizens who belonged

---

to Help Save Manassas, a local activist group formed to limit illegal immigration in the county. This group, although perceived by some of our informants as far to the right of the political center, generated extensive, vocal public support for the policy. A County supervisor worked with the Immigration Reform Law Institute (IRLI), an affiliate of FAIR, to craft the initial language of the proposal. The Chairman of the Board of County Supervisors was vocal in his support of the proposal during his re-election campaign in fall 2007. By early October of 2007, as seen in a Washington Post survey of the region, 61% of likely voters in Northern Virginia called illegal immigration a problem where they lived. In Prince William, "half of all residents called immigration the most or second-most important issue facing the state, and a majority classified illegal immigration as a very serious local problem."^{24} Other supervisors, also up for re-election in the fall, voted for various versions of the policy but suggested that additional work be done to ascertain the feasibility of implementing the resolution as initially proposed. Finally, the County Executive, County Attorney, Chief of the County Police Department, and their staffs were all involved in making modifications to the resolution.

### 2.5 The Initial June 2007 Immigration Enforcement Proposal

At the June 25, 2007 regular Board of County Supervisors meeting, Supervisor John Stirrup proposed a policy resolution restricting social services to illegal immigrants and directing the police department to inquire into the immigration status of everyone detained^{25} in routine work. At that point, therefore, the policy was expressly directed toward all illegal immigrants.

Overall, interviews with the police, County staff and some of the supervisors indicated that the proposal, its breadth and the speed with which its proponents pushed for a decision took them by surprise:

> Supervisor Stirrup brought this up and said, “I have an issue with illegal immigration and here’s this policy I’d like you to take a look at, and I’d like to vote on it in two weeks,” which is generally our policy. You can introduce an issue and vote on it in two weeks. [But] this is not your typical issue, obviously there were a lot of broad issues that we had to consider and that’s why it took us some time to go through the analysis and also arrive at the policy position that we have today, which is significantly different than the one that was first introduced.

> …My first reaction was that this was not something you could decide on in two weeks; my initial reaction was that it was kind of, um, sudden. But at the same time I thought…it was at least something that merited consideration, we had already established a 287(g) program in our jail about six months prior to that, where we were basically having our jail identify inmates who were not legally present and give their names to immigration and customs enforcement, and the idea of extending that training to the police in appropriate circumstances, again, mainly related to what I would call criminal illegal aliens.

> Supervisor Michael May

Despite the surprise, there were earlier indications that immigration enforcement was becoming an issue in the county. In 2005, as the City of Herndon was cracking down on day laborer sites, a Prince William County supervisor requested the Board’s permission to convene a task force to look into how to better manage such sites in PWC. The task force recommended that the County apply for federal money to create an indoor site in a commercial area, but the supervisors did not discuss the report in any detail:

---


^{25} The definition of “detained” refers to people stopped by the police for diverse reasons ranging from traffic violations, being intoxicated in public to questioning them about criminal activity.
It got no reception at all, the board received the report, they didn’t want a presentation, and the political instincts of the board were already attuned to the fact that this was not an issue that they would be successful with—if they were willing to accommodate day laborers. Then [things] got quiet until [the immigration enforcement issue] resurfaced in the fall and winter of 2007.

Craig Gerhart, Former County Executive

In May 2007, a Freedom of Information Act [FOIA] request was filed with the County Attorney’s Office for the release of a Police Department policy, General Order 26.05, pertaining to the Department’s approach to immigration status checks, which were limited. Following the Department’s custom of refusing to release the Department’s general orders, which specified police procedures and thus could potentially place the Department’s staff in hazardous situations, Chief Charlie T. Deane refused the request.26

On June 5, 2007, Supervisor Stirrup requested a copy of the general order, and on June 12th, the County Attorney received another FOIA request for General Order 26.05, which the Chief then decided to release in order to quell suspicion that the Police Department was hiding something or that the policy was intended to protect illegal immigrants, which some residents believed.27 In fact, the leader of Help Save Manassas referred to it in an interview as “akin to a sanctuary policy.” In addition to his decision to release the document, the Chief also wrote a letter to the Board of County Supervisors that detailed the reason for his decision.

In the two weeks following the policy’s introduction on June 25, 2007, advocates for the policy organized an email and telephone campaign aimed at convincing the Board of County Supervisors to vote to support it. Their tactics proved to be well chosen. As a subsequent political analysis in the Washington Post put it, “In the end, the quiet, coordinated, Internet-savvy lobbying efforts of the pro crack-down camp won over…the mass mobilization techniques of their opponents.” Supervisors indicated that their constituents were very concerned about the issue; they received numerous e-mails and faxes.28 At the same time, County staff and the Police Department requested that the Board give them time to study the proposal and ensure its legality and feasibility.

From the Police Chief’s point of view, mandating the Department to inquire into the immigration status of all detainees (as was required in the original policy and general order number 45.0) would severely drain Department and other County resources, expand the role of the Department’s mission beyond traditional policing and into what has traditionally been a federal responsibility, impact public trust in a negative manner among immigrant communities leading to fear of cooperation in reporting crime and assisting police, set unrealistic expectations and would not address things such as day laborer issues. He was also concerned that it would lead to further jail overcrowding.

From the County Attorney’s point of view, a clause in the initial draft noting that citizens could request a writ of mandamus from the courts if County departments and agencies did not follow the mandate potentially placed County staff in additional legal jeopardy, primarily by indicating that the Board supported such citizen actions. And from the County Executive’s point of view, there needed to be careful assessment of County services that could legally be withheld from illegal immigrants, were already being withheld as a result of state or federal law, or could legally be withheld but not without financial or other costs to the County and its residents.

26 For a profile of Chief Deane, see Mack (2008, July 24).
27 Deane (2007b, June 15).
By July 10, 2007, when the resolution was passed into law by the Board, several changes had been made. Instead of directing the police to ask after the immigration status of all people detained, it mandated them to ask about immigration status if there was “probable cause” to believe that the detainee might not have legal documentation to be in the United States. The Board directed the Police Department to define “probable cause.” The redrafted resolution also directed the County staff and the Police Department to undertake reviews of the policy’s impact on their operations: The County staff had 90 days to review the potential effects of withholding County services from illegal immigrants, and the Police Department had 60 days to figure out a way to implement the policy.

2.6 Refining the Policy and General Order 45

In the following 90 days, County agencies, working closely with the County Attorney and County Executive, discovered that relatively few services that were not already denied to illegal immigrants could be withheld. Many services, such as TANF, child care subsidies and health insurance, are already restricted to legal immigrants and citizens. Others, including public health services such as immunizations, are focused on ensuring the safety of a population, and excluding certain groups from those services is potentially dangerous to other residents. Denying the use of roads and County parks would be impractical. The County staff, however, found eight relatively small programs that could legally and practicably be restricted to legal residents. They included home repair assistance and a tax break for elderly residents.

The Police Department began its own careful study of immigration law and the potential for local intervention in an issue under federal jurisdiction. The Board had never asked the Police Department to implement a policy change of this magnitude in such a short period of time. In an August 31, 2007 report to the Board of County Supervisors, the Chief outlined a new policy, General Order 45: “The Police Department will investigate the citizenship or immigration status of any person who is lawfully detained for a violation of a state law or County ordinance, if there is probable cause to believe such person is in violation of federal immigration law and when such inquiry will not expand the duration of the detention. Racial profiling is expressly prohibited, as emphasized in existing General Order 2.01, Section C, 56.” In addition to the new general order, the Chief suggested the creation of a new “criminal alien unit,” whose officers would receive 287(g) training and be authorized by Immigration and Customs Enforcement to act on its behalf and issue federal detainers on illegal immigrants.

Chief Deane had four major concerns about the original resolution (general order No. 45) that he wanted to address in the policy’s implementation:

1. Immigrants would feel intimidated, trust the police less and be less willing to report crimes, resulting in a more dangerous community.

2. Residents who supported the policy might have expectations surpassing the local police department’s authority to address the immigration issue. For example, although police officers can check the federal databases for criminal immigration warrants and act on criminal warrants that exist, they have no authority to detain illegal immigrants who have no criminal warrants and who have not committed a local criminal offense. To address those concerns, the Chief requested that the Board of County Supervisors authorize an extensive public education campaign about the policy.

3. The policy could result in lawsuits of racial profiling against the Police Department. To address this concern as much as possible, he suggested that the Board provide sufficient funds to provide ade-

\[29\] Deane (2007a).

\[30\] Ibid.
quate training to all officers. As we shall see, the training only partially addressed his concerns about vulnerability to allegations of racial profiling, and his concerns grew over the coming months.

Jail overcrowding, already a problem, would intensify. ICE, the Chief pointed out, did not have its own jail facilities, and if the County jailed larger numbers of people, the already overcrowded Adult Detention Center might become more so.

In developing General Order 45 for carrying out the PWC Board’s mandate, PWCPD examined federal and state laws pertaining to immigration; consulted with prosecutorial authorities including the U.S. Attorney’s Office, the Virginia Attorney General, the Virginia Commonwealth’s Attorney’s Office, and the County Attorney’s Office for Prince William County; investigated research and other documents on immigration enforcement efforts around the country; and participated in national forums on immigration. In total, PWCPD estimates that it devoted 1,200 personnel hours to this effort.

PWCPD planned a three-pronged approach:

1. Make the following required changes:
   a. Replace the existing Immigration Enforcement Policy (General Order 26) by developing a new policy that would comply with the BOCS resolution. (The new policy would be known as General Order 45, later amended to General Order 45.01.)
   b. Create the Criminal Alien Unit – acquire Fed authority (287g).

2. Implement an extensive public education program to inform the public of the facts regarding the new initiative.

3. Retain a research group to evaluate the impacts of the new policy.

In crafting its policy for conducting immigration checks, PWCPD was limited by the fact that local jurisdictions do not have the authority to enforce federal immigration laws. Consequently, PWCPD officers cannot detain or arrest persons solely for suspicion of being an illegal immigrant. However, local officers do have the authority to check the immigration status of persons who are lawfully detained for suspicion of violating state or local statutes. (This was true even before the policy.) If a suspected illegal immigrant has not committed an offense requiring arrest under state or local law, an officer may arrest the subject under certain circumstances: i.e., there is a criminal ICE detainer for the subject; the subject is a convicted felon who was previously deported; or the officer has reason to believe that the subject will not appear in court to answer for a summons offense (e.g., due to being in the country illegally). Absent these circumstances, however, officers cannot arrest a person for being an unauthorized immigrant.

In keeping with the PWC Board’s mandate that PWCPD undertake a cooperative 287(g) enforcement program with ICE, PWCPD also established a 7-member Criminal Alien Unit (CAU) to undergo federal 287(g) training. PWCPD allocated six officers and a crime analyst to CAU and tasked them with a mission to focus specifically on the apprehension and deportation of serious

---

31 This provision is specified under Virginia law.
32 Circumstances under which this might occur include summonses for driving without an operator’s license or committing a summons offense and the subject’s identity cannot be verified.
immigrant offenders and to conduct special investigations into operations like document mills that provide false identification. PWCPD has kept the CAU focused on serious offenders and has not used the unit to conduct sweeps or round-ups of suspected illegal immigrants.

Finally, PWCPD designed a public education effort with two broad goals. One was to assuage fear and distrust that the policy might cause in the immigrant community. The other goal was to inform the broader public, and particularly those in favor of the policy, as to what the police could and could not do under the policy.

2.7 The October 2007 Resolutions

Given the legal and practical challenges to the initial (July 2007) proposal, the Board of County Supervisors passed two resolutions pertaining to the policy in October 2007. The first, passed on October 2, 2007, accepted the reports of the Chief and the County Executive and directed the Police Chief to make General Order 45 public.33 The second resolution was formally brought up for consideration at the October 16th Board meeting. After a tumultuous public hearing at a Board meeting that lasted until 2:30 am on October 17,34 the Board of County Supervisors voted unanimously in favor of the new illegal immigration enforcement policy. The resolution that accomplished several tasks: It directed County staff to restrict eight local service programs to those with legal documentation to be in the US. It also directed the Chief to implement General Order 45 by March 1, 2008, establish a seven-person criminal alien unit, conduct a public information campaign, and hire a qualified evaluator. It also directed funds toward those efforts. The resolution passed at the end of the October 16th meeting thus allowed several months for the Police Department to implement the policy. General Order 45.01 is shown in full in Appendix A. In this report we refer to the policy passed on October 16th as the “initial policy.” General Order 45.01, effective March 3, 2008, stated:

“. . . if there is probable cause to believe a person is in violation of federal immigration law and when such inquiry will not unlawfully expand the duration of the detention, it is the policy of this Department that officers shall investigate the citizenship or immigration status of a person who is lawfully detained for a violation of state law or county ordinance.”

An important aspect of this sequence of events was the public, extended, and sometimes acrimonious nature of the debate over the proposed policy. Press coverage was continuous and sometimes shrill. The national media picked up the story; it was in the local papers, the Spanish press,35 the Washington Post, and played on cable news shows. The press brought heightened attention to the sentiments of the policy’s proponents, the consternation of the policy’s opponents, and the fears

---

33 This addressed the Chief’s concern that if the actual language of some of the Police Department’s general orders were made public, the Department might lose its legal ability to restrict the release of other general orders that could put police officers at risk. The resolution explicitly stated that the release of General Order 45 did not waive the Department’s or the Board of Supervisor’s rights to exempt other general orders from Freedom of Information Act requests.
34 Washington Post (2007, October 17).
35 See, for example, Prince William: Una Tierra Prohibida [Prince William: A Prohibited Land]. (2007, February 29), Washington Hispanic, p. 1. The banner headline accompanied a Spanish-language news story that begins: "For many years the United States was considered by many immigrants as the land of promises, not only for the work opportunities but also for the quality of life improvements it could offer families. But, on March 3rd a new anti-immigrant resolution goes into effect that gives the police the authority to act like immigration agents in Prince William, in the state of Virginia, and change this region into a land prohibited for undocumented people…the measure has provoked a mass exodus of immigrants to other neighboring states that are more friendly to immigrant communities." [Translation: Nicole Fedoravicius.]
and concerns of local Hispanic residents. There can be no doubt that this visible and rancorous community conflict played a role in the subsequent responses of some residents. Thus, while our primary concern is to evaluate the policy’s effects, these cannot be completely separated from the effects of the public conflict that surrounded the policy from the start.

2.8 Further Modifications to the Policy and General Order 45.01

In late fall 2007 and early winter 2008, as the Police Department prepared to implement General Order 45.01, the Chief and the County Attorney’s Office became increasingly concerned about the probability of unfounded racial lawsuits against the department. At issue was the “probable cause” standard in General Order 45, which mandated officers to inquire into immigration status if they had probable cause to think a person might be in the country illegally. In the view of the Chief, the issue was not if the department would become subject to those complaints and lawsuits, but when. Emotions in the county were running high, local and national newspapers were covering the issue, and online blogs on both sides were very active. Training his officers was one safeguard against such lawsuits, but the Chief also thought that the Department would benefit from cameras in patrol cars. Cameras would provide the evidence to protect officers from unfounded lawsuits as part of the Department’s overall risk management approach. For this reason, PWCPD advocated the purchase of cameras for all patrol cars so that encounters between police and citizens would be recorded and could be available for use in court if needed.

The cost of the cameras—an estimated $3.2 million—was prohibitive in a county that was facing numerous housing foreclosures, dropping home values and reduced tax revenues. In lieu of cameras, a modification to the policy was proposed and passed by the Board on April 29, 2008, which mandated officers to conduct immigration checks only of arrestees. In this report, we refer to this policy as the “revised” or “amended” policy. The revised General Order 45.01, which is shown in Appendix A, reads:

“Officers shall investigate the citizenship or immigration status of all persons who are arrested for a violation of a state law or county ordinance when such arrest results in a physical custodial arrest.”

Pre-arrest immigration status checks could still be conducted at the officer’s discretion.

After rescinding the original General Order 45.01 at the end of April 2008, PWCPD formulated and later implemented the new policy (revised General Order 45.01) on July 1, 2008. This policy remains in effect today. An important benefit to the current (revised) policy in the view of PWCPD is that it more clearly focuses immigration efforts on those who have committed criminal acts, a policy for which there seems to be more public consensus. Although post-arrest immigration status checks were already being done in the Adult Detention Center, where everyone’s status was being checked under the 287(g) agreement that had been put into place the previous July, the new resolution also covered individuals who were arrested but not detained in the Adult Detention Center. Those people constituted a significant portion of all arrested persons.

2.9 The Role of the Policy’s Opponents

We have said little about those people who opposed the policy, primarily because they had little impact on how it was shaped, although there were residents and community leaders who opposed

---

36 Racial profiling is specifically prohibited by PWCPD policy.
37 PWCPD may still find itself open to charges of racial profiling in the conduct of these discretionary inquiries. Nonetheless, as discussed elsewhere in the report, this has not been an issue thus far.
the policy. Mexicans Without Borders, a left-of-center immigration support and advocacy group that had organized to oppose the Manassas housing zoning policy, appeared to have been caught off guard when the resolution was proposed in June and passed in July 2007. However, it quickly organized during summer and fall 2007, marshalling a rally in front of a County office building and a week-long boycott of local businesses. The group also encouraged people to attend Board of Supervisor meetings to speak out against the resolution.

The opponents’ limited impact in the debate over the resolution was probably due to several factors. The debate took place in an election year, and some believe that the fact that many members of Mexicans Without Borders are not citizens and cannot vote meant that supervisors would not include them in their political calculations for the elections.\(^{38}\) Second, several people have said that differences in strategies between the policy’s proponents and opponents contributed to the opponents’ lack of success in altering the policy.\(^{39}\) The organization Help Save Manassas organized an email campaign to the supervisors in support of the policy, and County supervisors indicated that they had received many emails from citizens. Mexicans Without Borders organized demonstrations. For supervisors facing elections, the individual, written opinions of registered voters in their districts probably resonated more than the speeches of leaders of an advocacy group. Finally, the initial (July 2007) resolution was passed so quickly that it took the opposition by surprise, and they were late to organize.

Even though Mexicans Without Borders and other residents who opposed the resolution were unsuccessful in altering it, they became visible in the local and national press and helped shape the community debate about what the policy’s effects would be. From their perspective, the policy was anti-immigrant, tainted with racism, and would lead to legal immigrants leaving the county because they would be afraid and feel unwelcome in the community.

\(^{38}\) McKelvey (2007, November 6).

\(^{39}\) Washington Post (4 November 2007), op. cit.
3 The Goals of the Immigration Policy, Possible Unintended Consequences, and Implementation Obstacles

A fundamental step in evaluating the effectiveness of any new policy is to determine its goals. This is not always a straightforward task, because policies are created and implemented through complex governmental and political processes that involve many actors and interests. Those who seek to influence a proposed policy decision may differ in their goals and are not always open in expressing their goals. Those on one side of a policy debate may give distorted accounts of the “goals” or motivations of those on the other side. It is also not unusual for policy goals to shift or become altered as the policy proceeds from initial proposals to legislative passage to implementation by the executive departments of government. On the other hand, it is part of the policy process that consensus is usually reached on a policy’s goals by the time it is put into law and implemented by the government. Through our intensive interviews with members of the Board of County Supervisors, County officials, and key local activists and community representatives who were part of the policy debate, we have been able to identify a set of goals that reflects the general consensus among those who passed and implemented the County’s illegal immigration enforcement policy.

3.1 The policy’s goals

In its narrowest formulation, the County’s current Immigration Enforcement Policy is aimed at identifying and removing from the community illegal aliens who commit serious crimes. The public debate and our interviews make clear, however, that the resolutions passed by the Board (which included provisions to deny County services to illegal residents) were also intended to reduce the number of illegal immigrants in the County. Some actors in the drama of the resolution’s passage had quite different goals. Some in the community who advocated the policy made clear (in their blog entries and in confidential comments in our citizen surveys) that they were hoping to “take back the County” by reversing the tide of rapid in-migration of Hispanics to Prince William County. However, it is clear both from the public record and from our private interviews that this was not a shared goal of the County Supervisors who unanimously passed and then unanimously modified the resolutions.40 The focus of the board was clearly on illegal immigration. There was much discussion in the public debate about the costs to the County that resulted from the influx of illegal immigrants, and reducing those costs must be recognized as one of the policy’s goals. There is no doubt that advocacy of the policy helped to advance the political goals of some Board members who were running for office in the 2007 elections, but this must be viewed as a secondary gain for the politicians and not as a goal of the County government. Some of the concerns raised by opponents of the policy were shared by members of the Board and the County government: for example, the concern that instituting a harsh immigration policy might adversely affect police-community relations and thus make it harder to prevent crime for occurring, or the concern that accusations of racial profiling might result. These concerns were eventually addressed in both the revised resolution and the formal implementation plans of the Police Department, County Attorney, and County staff, so that avoiding racial profiling and maintaining good relations with the Hispanic community became explicit goals of the policy implementation. The resolution passed by the Board on April 29, 2008, which modified the policy into its current form, makes explicit mention of “the risk of false allegations of ‘racial profiling’ against police officers,” and the Board’s responsibility for “managing legal and other risk in County operations, including law enforcement.” It also states that the modification of the servs “to emphasize and clarify that Police Department actions are to be directed at illegal aliens who commit crimes in the County.”

40 No local government in the United States could legitimately or legally propose or implement a policy aimed at discriminating against or “keeping out” a racial, ethnic, or nationality group.
Our analysis of the policy process and our interviews with those who advocated, created, implemented, and modified the immigration policy yields the following list of six goals that the Prince William County Immigration Enforcement Policy was designed to achieve:

1) Reduce the number of illegal immigrants in the county;
2) Improve public safety and reduce crime;
3) Reduce overcrowded housing problems, neighborhood nuisances and public disorder, such as loitering at day labor sites and public intoxication;
4) Save money by delivering fewer services to illegal immigrants;
5) Maintain the Prince William County Police Department’s reputation for professionalism, and maintain community confidence and trust in police;
6) Maintain County’s reputation as an inclusive community, both internally (among its current residents) and externally (among people outside the County).

Unfortunately, we have not been able to gather any data regarding the fourth goal (saving money by delivering fewer services), as our work has focused on the work of the police department, the effect of their work on the community, and the effect of the policy on policing. It should be noted that, after careful study by the County staff, it turned out that only a few services could legally be denied to illegal immigrants by the County, due to a variety of regulations surrounding health and welfare services that are funded with Federal dollars. (These services are listed in at attachment to the resolution of October 16, 2007, shown in Appendix A.) It is doubtful, therefore, that any large cost savings were realized through the ‘denial of service’ sections of the immigration enforcement resolution. On the other hand, there was a potential for cost saving in the County schools if the number of ESOL students was reduced by the policy. Our data gathering does include trends in ESOL enrollments (reported in section 7.3.1), but we have not attempted to translate enrollments into dollar costs or cost savings.

### 3.2 Possible unintended consequences of the policy

A comprehensive policy evaluation must attend not only to a policy’s goals but also to its unintended consequences, especially to undesirable consequences. Numerous concerns were raised during the policy debate about adverse results that might occur if the policy were implemented. Our evaluation has been especially attentive to the following possible, adverse consequences that could have occurred. The policy might:

H) Facilitate overzealous or inappropriate enforcement actions by police;
I) Generate a flood of costly litigation against the Police Department and the County government;
J) Overburden the Police Department to the point of reducing its effectiveness;
K) Generate administrative costs far greater than anticipated at the time of adoption;
L) Create fear and a sense of being unwelcome among immigrants in general;
M) Cause *legal* immigrants, or Hispanics generally, to leave the county; and
N) Result in lower crime reporting from the Hispanic community, or even increase their victimization.

As will be seen in our evaluation, most of these consequences did not in fact occur.
3.3 Implementation obstacles

Finally, our evaluation was attentive to possible implementation obstacles that might prevent the policy from achieving its goals. We wondered if ICE, the Federal agency responsible for processing illegal aliens who are turned over to their custody, would be able to handle the increased workload. Would the local jail be able to hold the new detainees? Would there be money to pay for placement of detainees in outside facilities? There were concerns that police supervisors would be overburdened with supervisory duties in connection with the actions of line officers in processing inquiries into the immigration status of persons encountered in the field. We wondered if patrol officers would understand the policy’s legal complexities and whether they would cooperate fully in carrying out their new duties and the new documentation requirements accompanying the policy’s implementation.

In summary, the chapters that follow will evaluate the County’s immigration policy primarily by assessing the degree to which its identified goals were achieved. We will also consider whether the policy had adverse, unintended consequences, and will evaluate the degree to which implementation obstacles were significant in affecting the policy’s outcomes. We will thus be evaluating both the implementation process as the Police Department put the policy into effect, and the outcomes of the policy for the Department and the community it serves. The watershed decision of the Board in April 2008 to modify the police enforcement policy, just two months after its implementation, was surely consequential for the policy’s outcomes, but as will be seen below there is evidence that the original policy—and the very public controversy that was generated by its consideration and adoption—also played an important role in determining what happened.
4  Criminal Justice Processing of Illegal Immigrants in Prince William County

Before describing the experiences of PWCPD and other criminal justice agencies with the immigration policy and 287(g) process in PWC, we first describe the process by which these agencies handle known and suspected illegal immigrants. We first discuss processing of suspected illegal immigrants by PWCPD under the current version of its immigration enforcement policy, General Order 45.01, which has been in effect since July 2008. We then discuss the handling of illegal immigrants by local (state-appointed) magistrates and by the Prince William – Manassas Regional Adult Detention Center (ADC), which serves as the local jail in PWC.

4.1  PWPCD’s Immigration Enforcement Policy

Under the original version of PWCPD’s immigration policy that was in effect from March 1, 2008 through April 29, 2008 (General Order 45), officers were instructed to inquire into the citizenship or immigration status of persons who were lawfully detained for a violation of state or local law, provided that the inquiry did not unreasonably extend the detention (see Figure 3-1). After the suspension of this policy during May and June of 2008, PWCPD implemented its current (amended) immigration policy (General Order 45.01) in July 2008.41

Under the current policy, officers are no longer required to run immigration checks on suspected immigrants that they detain without arrest, but they still have discretion to conduct such checks if they have reason to believe that someone they have detained is an illegal immigrant. However, the new policy mandates that officers run immigration checks on all arrestees.

Figure 4-1 depicts police procedures under the current policy. When an immigration check indicates or suggests that an arrestee is an illegal immigrant, the arresting officer records this information on a field interview card that is forwarded to PWCPD’s 287(g) unit, named the Criminal Alien Unit (CAU), for discretionary follow-up. (We say more below about the CAU.) In addition, the arresting officer notifies the magistrate that the arrestee is a suspected illegal immigrant so that the magistrate can take this information into consideration for the determination of release and bail (we say more about the role of magistrates below). Finally, officers notify CAU and through it, ICE, when they find that an arrestee has an ICE detainer.

In cases where probable cause does not exist for an arrest, officers still have authority to extend the detention if their initial contact with a detainee yields a reasonable suspicion that the person is an undocumented or illegal immigrant. If the check indicates that the detainee is an illegal immigrant for whom the federal Immigrations and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) has issued a criminal detainer, officers are to arrest the subject for subsequent processing by ICE or PWCPD’s Criminal Alien Unit (CAU).42 If the immigration check indicates or suggests that the detainee is in the country illegally but shows no ICE detainer, officers record the contact on a field interview card that is then forwarded to ICE and CAU for discretionary follow-up. It is important to note that officers

41 See our 2009 interim report for a more extended discussion of this original version of PWCPD’s immigration enforcement policy.

42 Even before the implementation of the first immigration policy, PWCPD officers were expected to check the names of traffic violators, criminal suspects, and arrestees against federal National Crime Information Center (NCIC) databases and to hold any such persons wanted for criminal immigration violations (memo from PWCPD Chief Charlie Deane to the PWC Board of County Supervisors, June 15, 2007).
without 287(g) training—i.e., those not part of the CAU—cannot arrest detainees for federal immigration violations absent an ICE detainer or evidence that a detainee is a deported felon.

However, suspicion that a subject is an illegal immigrant might lead an officer to arrest the subject if the officer has grounds for issuing a summons to the subject and feels there is reason to believe that the subject will not appear in court for the summons. Further, subjects may be arrested for summons offenses if they lack identification. They may also be arrested anytime they present false identification.
Figure 4-1: Processing of Suspected Illegal Immigrants by PWCPD under the Current Policy (General Order 45.01)

- **Physical Custodial Arrest** for violation of state or local law
  - Mandatory Immigration Status checks
    - Person is determined to be an illegal alien. No existing ICE Criminal Warrant / Detainer
      - Police officer notifies Magistrate of suspicion
        - Magistrate does not commit person to ADC
          - Officer completes and forwards Field Interview Card to CAU for discretionary follow-up through 287(g) agreement.
  - No Probable Cause for Arrest. Officer has Reasonable Articulable Suspicion to think Person is Illegal Immigrant
    - Discretionary Immigration Status checks
      - Person is determined to be an illegal alien. No existing ICE Criminal Warrant / Detainer
      - Magistrate commits person to ADC
        - Follow-up by ADC 287(g) agreement with ICE. Officer completes and forwards Field Interview Card thru CAU to ICE.

- **Lawful Detention**
  - Person is determined to be an illegal alien. ICE Criminal Warrant / Detainer exists
    - Officer completes and forwards Field Interview Card

Developed in consultation with the Prince William County Police Department.
4.2 PWCPD Contacts with Suspected Illegal Immigrants, March 2008-December 2008

PWCPD data show that officers had 2,984 contacts with suspected illegal immigrants from March 2008 through June 2010. Most of these suspects were charged with a state or local offense. In all, officers arrested 79% of the suspects and released 8% with a summons. Thirteen percent of suspected illegal immigrants encountered by officers were released following a field interview (meaning that they were not charged with a State or local offense or wanted for an immigration violation). These figures demonstrate that not all illegal immigrants identified by PWCPD are arrested, though illegal immigrants are most commonly identified during an arrest incident. Virtually all suspects thought to be illegal immigrants (98%-99%) were confirmed as such by PWCPD.

Police contacts with suspected illegal immigrants occurred for a variety of reasons. Table 4-1 shows the circumstances surrounding these contacts for the first two years under the current version of the policy (July 2008 through June 2010). Nearly three-quarters of contacts with illegal immigrants involved traffic stops or other calls for service. Other contacts involved checks of suspicious people and vehicles, warrant service, and other miscellaneous matters.

Table 4-1. Circumstances of PWCPD Contacts with Suspected Illegal Immigrants, July 2008-June 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circumstance</th>
<th>Number of Contacts</th>
<th>% of Contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traffic stop</td>
<td>1079</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call for service</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspicious person</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspicious vehicle</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrant service</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures provided by PWCPD. Total contacts = 2,608.

As shown in Figure 4-2, arrests of illegal immigrants during 2009 were concentrated in areas around Manassas and Woodbridge, which is where the County’s Hispanic population is concentrated more generally (Singer et al. 2009). The arrest locations are indicated by blue dots on the map. The red

---

43 Note that the 2008 data include two months (March and April of 2008) during which the original policy was in effect that required officers to check the immigration status of all lawfully detained persons suspected of being illegal immigrants. The 2008 data also include two months (May and June of 2008) during which PWCPD suspended its immigration policy.
dots show the residence addresses of the illegal immigrants who were arrested; they also typically lived in these areas. About 87% of illegal immigrants arrested during 2008 and 2009 were charged with misdemeanor or traffic violations and about 9% were charged with felony offenses (PWCPD 2009: 14; 2010: 15). (We review the offenses committed by illegal immigrants in more detail in Section 8.)

Figure 4-2 shows the country of birth of the illegal immigrants, arrested and jailed in the first nine months of 2010, who were placed on detainer by the ADC. The overwhelming majority (95.3%) of these individuals were born in Latin American countries. Most of these were from just four countries: El Salvador (37.4 percent of all those detained), Mexico (25.3%), Guatemala (14.8%) and Honduras (14.7%).

4.3 The Role of Magistrates and ADC in the Processing of Illegal Immigrants

After processing by PWCPD, arrestees are brought before state-appointed magistrates who make decisions about pre-trial release and bail (see Figure 4-3). Magistrates are not required to detain suspected illegal immigrants that do not have ICE detainers. Under this circumstance, a magistrate may release a suspected illegal immigrant on personal recognizance or bail if the subject has not committed a serious offense, is not a danger to anyone, and appears to have strong community ties. Statistics on these releases are not readily available, but the magistrates with whom we spoke estimate that around one-third of suspected illegal immigrants are released without detention. However, illegal immigrant status does create more of a tendency in favor of detention; the estimated release rate for suspected illegal immigrants is substantially lower than the 75% release rate estimated for all arrestees. The police are supposed to notify the magistrate and the jail if they think an arrestee is an illegal immigrant.

Arrestees not released by a magistrate are taken to ADC where they are screened by intake officers. In accordance with requirements established by state law in 2007, ADC intake officers screen arrestees for illegal immigration status based on three criteria: 1) a birthplace outside the United States; 2) lack of a social security number or use of a false social security number; and 3) non-U.S. citizenship. Arrestees meeting one or more of these criteria are referred to ADC’s 287(g) unit whose members interview the arrestees and run various database queries on them. ADC’s 287(g) unit serves the appropriate documents on arrestees identified as illegal immigrants, places detainers on them, and notifies ICE. ICE then takes custody of the arrestees after they have served any applicable sentence(s) for their state and/or local offense(s). Anyone not taken by ICE is released after serving his or her sentence.

44 There are far fewer points on the map of residence addresses than arrest locations because some of the arrestees reside outside PWC+cities and because some did not have address information that was sufficiently accurate for geocoding.

45 Note again that PWCPD officers forward information about all arrested illegal immigrants to CAU for potential follow-up.
Figure 4-1. Locations where Illegal Immigrants were Arrested in PWC, and where they resided, 2009.
Figure 4-2. Country of Birth for illegal immigrants arrested and placed on detainer by ADC, Jan-Sept 2010.

### Arrests by Country of Birth

- **El Salvador, 37.4%**
- **Mexico, 25.6%**
- **Guatemala, 14.8%**
- **Honduras, 14.7%**
- **Other Hispanic Countries, 3.6%**
- **Africa, 1.8%**
- **Asia, 1.4%**
- **Europe, 0.8%**
- **Non-Hispanic Caribbean, 0.2%**

---

*Center for Survey Research*
Data provided by ADC show that the facility received 11,386 arrestees of foreign birth from July 2007 through June 2010 (the first three years of ADC’s 287(g) program). This figure includes persons arrested by PWCPD and by other law enforcement agencies in the County (most notably, the police departments of Manassas and Manassas Park). Foreign-born commitments declined 16% during this period, falling from 4,161 in fiscal year 2008 (July 2007-June 2008) to 3,487 in fiscal year 2010 (July 2009-June 2010). Monthly trends are shown in Figure 4-4.
ADC’s 287(g) unit initiated immigration checks on 9,284 of the foreign-born arrestees (they have run immigration checks on virtually all such arrestees since April 2008) and issued detainers for 2,783 (or 30% of those for whom they initiated immigration checks). The number of detainers issued remained steady at around 960 per year during FY 2009 and FY 2010. ADC has discretion over whether to issue detainers for illegal immigrants, particularly those who have committed minor offenses and have no criminal history. The 6,501 foreign-born arrestees for whom ADC did not issue detainers thus includes persons that were not illegal immigrants as well as illegal immigrants for whom ADC chose not to issue a detainer (ADC may still send records to ICE, however, about persons in the latter group).

In total, ADC released 2,499 illegal immigrants to ICE from July 2007 through June 2010. This figure amounts to 90% of the persons for whom ADC issued detainers during this period (some of the remaining 10% were likely transferred to ICE after June 2010, and others may be transferred after serving sentences for State or local offenses). Because ICE tends to focus its resources on serious offenders and others who have been previously deported, many illegal immigrants arrested for minor offenses (such as public drunkenness) are released back into the community after their stay in ADC. We have no specific figures on the numbers of illegal immigrants processed in ADC who are deported by ICE or released back into the community. (PWC officials have been unable to obtain this information from ICE.) If Prince William County’s experiences reflect the estimates provided in a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on ICE’s operations, about two-thirds may either have agreed to voluntary deportation or been detained pending deportation proceedings (GAO, 2009). More recently, however, this may have changed in response to policy changes within ICE (see Section 6). ADC officials estimate informally that about half of the people they turned over to ICE during FY 2010 were released on recognizance (per ICE’s instructions).
without being taken to an ICE facility.\footnote{Prior to that time, all persons released to ICE were taken to ICE facilities at least temporarily. This change appears to have been linked to a nationwide change to the 287(g) in late 2009 that placed sought to refocus the program more precisely on serious offenders. We return to this issue below.} There are likely more that are released after a temporary stay in an ICE facility. In 2008, for example, ICE released over 51,000 detainees into communities around the country via bond, orders of supervision or recognizance, or parole (Schriro, 2009).

ADC statistics also show that 225, or 9\%, of the persons processed by the jail’s 287(g) unit during the program’s first 3 years were returned to ADC after release to ICE. This number includes people who were returned because they were convicted of State or local charges that were pending when they were released to ICE. It also implies, however, that the percentage of persons released to ICE by ADC who were rearrested for new crimes in PWC was less than 9\%.

### 4.4 PWC’s Handling of Illegal Immigrants in Comparison to Other Jurisdictions

To put PWC’s immigration enforcement efforts in perspective, PWCPD and ADC are among 71 state and local law enforcement and correctional agencies around the country that were participating in the 287(g) program as of January 2010 (Rodriguez, Chishti, Capps, and St. John, 2010). Thirty-two of these agreements were jail agreements (such as ADC’s), 27 were task force agreements deputizing local law enforcement officers to conduct immigration enforcement (such as PWCPD’s agreement to operate the CAU), and 12 were hybrid jail/task force agreements. Most of these agreements were signed from 2007 through 2009. Participants in 287(g) include eight agencies in Maryland and Virginia other than PWCPD and ADC, five of which serve jurisdictions outside PWC.

In addition, many more law enforcement and correctional agencies work with ICE through other programs including the Secure Communities Program, the Criminal Alien Program (also known as CAP), and related efforts (see https://www.ice.gov/pi/topics/index.htm). The Secure Communities Program, launched in 2008, enables law enforcement and correctional agencies to check the fingerprints of detainees against Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) databases that include information about immigration violations. As of early 2010, 116 jurisdictions in 16 states were participating in the program (Rodriguez et al., 2010). Locally participating jurisdictions as of August 2010 included 4 jurisdictions in Maryland and all 129 jurisdictions in Virginia (see https://www.ice.gov/doclib/secure_communities/pdf/se_activated.pdf).

Under the CAP program, ICE also works with local detention facilities around the country to identify and remove criminal aliens. (ICE has not posted a public listing of agencies participating in CAP.) Both programs are operated in 287(g) jurisdictions as well as others that are not part of the 287(g) program.

Local immigration enforcement has also been examined in at least three surveys of local law enforcement agencies. One of these was conducted in 2007 with 168 police agencies affiliated with the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), a membership organization for police executives in medium to large (i.e., primarily urban and suburban) jurisdictions (PERF, 2008).\footnote{Generally, PERF agencies are those with 100 or more officers and/or a jurisdiction of 50,000 or more people that also have a chief executive who is a PERF member.} Of these agencies, 60\% reported that they check the immigration status of persons who are stopped, arrested, or detained for cause. Over half (57\%) of the agencies doing immigration checks indicated these checks are done pursuant to arrest and 36\% indicated that they are done when booking a suspect into a holding facility. However, 33\% indicated that they conduct immigration checks anytime they...
have probable cause to believe a person is in the country illegally. Further, although these checks may not be mandated by agency policy (this issue was not explicitly addressed), 18% reported doing immigration checks during investigative detentions and 7% during traffic stops.

A second survey conducted in 2007 included 237 police agencies in medium to large size cities, primarily cities and towns of 60,000 or more people (Decker et al., 2009). Three-quarters of the agencies reported that they contact ICE when holding a suspected illegal immigrant for a criminal violation, but few had formal agreements with ICE. Four percent were party to a 287(g) agreement, three percent had a formal memorandum of agreement for managing illegal immigrants who are incarcerated, and eight percent had ICE agents embedded in one or more their units.

Over 80% of the agencies reported that they typically check immigration status, contact ICE, or both when they arrest a suspected illegal immigrant for a violent crime, and about 50% reported doing so when they arrest a suspected illegal immigrant for a non-violent crime, even if the suspect does not have a prior criminal record. In contrast, only about 20% indicated that they check immigration status when they encounter suspected illegal immigrants during traffic stops, and fewer than 20% reported doing so when they encounter them as crime victims, complainants, or witnesses. However, only 39% of the agencies actually had a written policy for dealing with illegal immigrants.

A third survey concerning local law enforcement and immigration was conducted by PERF during late 2009 and early 2010 with police agencies in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. This survey was conducted specifically for this project and is discussed in detail in Appendix B. Here, we note some key findings from the survey.

Forty-six agencies completed the survey, representing 67% of the agencies in the greater DC area. Twenty-six, or 57%, of the agencies reported that immigration checks are conducted in their jurisdiction; in most of these places, immigration checks had been initiated sometime since 2006. In over half of the jurisdictions doing immigration checks (54%), the checks are conducted by the jails only. However, 12 agencies, accounting for roughly a quarter of all respondents (26%), indicated that their officers conduct immigration checks either alone (2) or in addition to the jails (10). Among this group, six agencies, or half, indicated that the checks are mandated by agency policy.

Half of the police agencies doing immigration checks conduct them when arresting a suspect, and 42% do so when booking suspects into a holding facility. Agencies also reported conducting immigration checks in other situations including traffic stops (n=3, or 25%), investigative detention (n=3, or 25%), and other circumstances such as the furtherance of a criminal investigation (n=4, or 33%). Further, in half of these agencies (6), officers can conduct checks whenever probable cause exists to believe a person is an illegal immigrant. This may extend to crime victims and witnesses as well; only 4 (or 33%) of the agencies doing immigration checks had policies protecting victims and witnesses from arrest if they were determined to be illegal immigrants. However, only 4 agencies, representing a third of those doing checks and about 9% of all respondents, had policies requiring immigration checks for all arrestees believed to be in the country illegally. Only 2 agencies, accounting for 17% of the police agencies doing immigration checks and 4% of all responding agencies, reported having policies that required officers to conduct immigration checks on any lawfully stopped persons who are reasonably believed to be in the country illegally.

---

48 This participation rate could be higher now due to the participation of all Virginia agencies in the Secure Communities Program. However, the Secure Communities Program is for the identification of persons with immigration detainers and criminal violations rather than all illegally present immigrants.
In sum, immigration enforcement efforts in PWC, including those of both PWCPD and ADC, are not entirely unique, even among other agencies in the Washington, DC area. Many law enforcement and correctional agencies around the country cooperate formally or informally with ICE on immigration enforcement efforts. Surveys of police agencies, though not based on nationally representative samples, suggest that jails and/or police agencies conduct immigration checks on detainees under some circumstances in more than half of all jurisdictions in metropolitan areas (including the DC area). Most commonly, these checks are done on persons arrested, as in PWC. However, substantial minorities of police agencies doing immigration checks conduct them under a variety of circumstances including traffic stops and investigative field detentions. Hence, PWCPD’s policy of allowing officers to conduct discretionary checks on detainees prior to arrest is also consistent with the practices of many other police agencies involved in immigration enforcement. Further, PWCPD provides explicit protection to crime victims and witnesses who are illegal immigrants, whereas the majority of police agencies involved in immigration enforcement in the DC area do not.

PWCPD’s policy of checking the immigration status of all arrestees appears to be more comprehensive than those of many other police agencies doing immigration checks. Few police agencies in the DC area, for example, have a requirement to run immigration checks on all arrestees. However, such policies may have less impact in jurisdictions where the jails are already conducting immigration checks. On the other hand, the original policy mandated by PWC’s Board of County Supervisors, which required PWCPD to do immigration checks on all lawfully detained persons, appears to have been more far-reaching than that of all but a small number of police agencies.
5 The PWCPD’s Experience Implementing General Order 45.01

In this section, we review PWCPD’s experience with preparing for and implementing its immigration policy. PWCPD’s immigration enforcement efforts have been twofold: immigration checks for detained or arrested persons and establishment of a Criminal Alien Unit (CAU) that focuses on a select group of serious offenders who are illegal immigrants. Our discussion covers both aspects and is based on the following data sources:

1. Department-wide surveys completed with PWCPD sworn personnel at all ranks during the fall of 2008 and fall of 2009 that examined their experiences with implementing the current immigration policy (General Order 45.01);
2. Interviews conducted with separate focus groups of patrol officers, first-line supervisors, mid-level commanders, CAU detectives, and senior command staff at various points from 2008 through 2010;
3. Ride-alongs conducted by research staff with patrol officers; and
4. Review of training materials and other public information provided by PWCPD.

We begin by reviewing how PWCPD prepared for the policy’s implementation. We then examine the overall experience of the Department with implementing the policy, followed by a focus on the experiences of the CAU. Finally, we consider the impact of the policy on other Departmental concerns, including recruitment, translation services, and costs.

5.1 Preparing for the Policy’s Implementation

Preparing for the implementation of the immigration policy mandated by the PWC Board of County Supervisors required PWCPD to accomplish a number of key tasks. These included: 1) developing a policy for checking the immigration status of persons who were suspected illegal immigrants; 2) developing and conducting training on the policy for PWCPD officers; 3) forming a special unit of officers to receive federal 287(g) training; and 4) educating the public about the new policy. These efforts contributed to a reported start-up cost of $1.3 million for PWCPD.

5.1.1 Policy Development

Section 2 discussed the concerns that shaped PWCPD’s formulation of both the original and current versions of the immigration policy. In developing a policy for carrying out the PWC Board’s mandate, PWCPD examined federal and state laws pertaining to immigration; consulted with prosecutorial authorities including the U.S. Attorney’s Office, the Virginia Attorney General, the Prince William County Commonwealth’s Attorney’s Office, and the County Attorney’s Office for Prince William County; investigated research and other documents on immigration enforcement efforts around the country; and participated in national forums on immigration. PWCPD estimates that the Department devoted 1,200 personnel hours to this effort.

---

49 It does not appear that PWCPD has conducted roundups or sweeps of any sort for illegal immigrants. Indeed, the Department has made regular efforts to assure PWC’s immigrant community that it is not conducting such activities.
5.1.2 Training

To prepare for the policy’s implementation, all PWCPD officers underwent training on General Order 45 during January and February of 2008. The training curriculum developed by PWCPD covered several issues. First, it provided background on immigration issues, the mandate of the PWC Board of County Supervisors, and the development of the Department’s policy. Training on the specifics of the policy included instruction on how to verify a person’s legal or illegal presence in the country and information about the legal statutes that govern the circumstances under which officers may arrest a person for suspicion of being an illegal immigrant. Materials provided to officers included decision tree diagrams for officers to follow when investigating immigration status, a list of factors that can lead to reasonable suspicion about a person’s immigration status, and information about acceptable documents for proving one’s identity. Both PWCPD and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security developed hypothetical scenarios that officers might encounter in carrying out General Order 45. A representative of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security also provided an overview on immigration law and deportation procedures.

In total, PWCPD devoted 4,884 officer-hours, or the equivalent of 611 officer-days, to this effort. As we discuss below, PWCPD officers felt that the training prepared them well for implementing the immigration policy.

After the suspension of General Order 45 at the end of April 2008, PWCPD retrained officers for the execution of General Order 45.01 which took effect on July 1, 2008. This retraining was relatively simple, requiring only 500 officer-hours in total.

5.1.3 Establishing the Criminal Alien Unit

In keeping with the PWC Board’s mandate that PWCPD undertake a cooperative 287(g) enforcement program with ICE, PWCPD also established a 7-member Criminal Alien Unit (CAU) to undergo federal 287(g) training. PWCPD allocated six officers and a crime analyst to the CAU and tasked them with a mission to focus specifically on the apprehension and deportation of serious immigrant offenders and to conduct special investigations into operations like document mills that provide false identification. In order to avoid alienating the legal immigrant and broader Hispanic community, PWCPD has kept the CAU focused on serious offenders and has not used the unit to conduct sweeps or round-ups of suspected illegal immigrants.

CAU members underwent an intensive 4-week federal training regimen that totaled 1,300 hours collectively. This training qualifies CAU members to serve as deputized federal immigration officers.

5.1.4 Community Outreach

From the outset, PWCPD commanders have been concerned about the public’s perception of the immigrant enforcement policy and about the policy’s impact on police-community relations, particularly as they pertain to PWC’s immigrant and larger minority community. The PWC Board of County Supervisors was also sensitive to this issue and thus required PWCPD to “…engage in [a] public outreach effort, particularly [to the] minority and/or immigrant communities.”

Accordingly, PWCPD designed a public education effort with two broad goals. One was to assuage fear and distrust that the policy might cause in the immigrant community. The other goal was to
inform the broader public, and particularly those in favor of the policy, as to what the police could and could not do under the policy.

As of early September 2008, PWCPD had conducted more than 100 meetings to discuss the policy with religious organizations, educational and special interest groups representing all sides of the issue, and the media, most of which the Chief attended (PWCPD presentation to the PWC Board of County Supervisors, September 9, 2008). The Department had also held sessions with over 300 County employees that included school faculty, school security personnel, and staff from social service agencies. The Department’s senior commanders in particular devoted much time to these efforts.

In each meeting, the Department personnel discussed their philosophy of carrying out the new mandate in a fair, lawful and reasonable manner. They also emphasized three elements of the policy:

- It would focus on criminal illegal immigrants meaning those who are in the US illegally who commit crimes.\(^{50}\)
- The Department would protect crime victims and cooperative witnesses regardless of their immigration status; and
- The Department would not engage in racial profiling.

PWCPD also prepared informational materials, provided in both English and Spanish, to educate the public about the policy. These have included news releases and brochures distributed through meetings, everyday police-citizen contacts, and the Department’s website. The current brochure available from PWCPD provides background and key points about the current immigration enforcement policy. It also includes a “frequently asked questions” section that addresses questions like the following:

- What is the difference between the revised policy and the original policy?
- If a police officer gives me a summons (ticket), can that officer question my immigration status?
- Is it true that immigrants should be afraid of reporting any crimes to the police because if they do, they may be turned over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)?
- Does the policy require police officers to ask everyone they encounter for proof of legal residence/status?
- Do I have to carry some form of ID with me wherever I go?
- What forms of identification will officers accept?

In sum, PWCPD devoted considerable effort to the planning and implementation of the policy. Further, many of these efforts and their associated costs are ongoing. We return to these and other implementation issues below in discussing PWCPD’s experiences with implementing the policy.

\(^{50}\) Being in the country without legal documentation is considered a civil rather than criminal offense.
5.2 Officers' Views and Experiences with Regard to the Immigration Policy: Survey Results

In the fall of 2008, we conducted a survey of all sworn personnel in PWCPD to examine their views on the Department’s immigration policy and their experiences implementing it. Officers completed self-administered, anonymous questionnaires during roll-call meetings at the start of their shifts. The survey was completed by 379 officers and commanders, or 73% of the Department’s sworn force. Approximately one year later, we again questioned PWCPD sworn personnel about these issues in a follow-up survey that was completed by 299 officers and commanders, using the same methods. In the section below, we highlight key results from the responses of 287 officers and commanders who completed both surveys (a group representing approximately 56% of PWCPD’s sworn personnel and 76% of those that did the time 1 survey).51 Many of their views and experiences were consistent over time. Unless otherwise stated, differences between the responses in the first and second surveys were not statistically significant (a statistically significant difference is one that has only a small likelihood of being due to random fluctuation rather than a true change in the officers’ beliefs). We supplement this discussion with information gathered during interviews, focus groups, and ride-alongs with PWCPD personnel. (A more detailed description of the survey methodology and the time1-time2 comparisons is presented in Appendix C. The time 1 survey results are also discussed at length in our 2009 interim report.)

5.2.1 Officers’ Knowledge of the Policy and General Views on the Policy

In our survey of PWCPD personnel, officers were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements designed to assess their knowledge of and comfort with PWCPD’s current immigration policy (General Order 45.01). Response options included “strongly agree”, “agree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “disagree”, and “strongly disagree.” Table 5-1 shows the percentage of officers who agreed or strongly agreed with each item at both points in time.

Overall, officers’ views have remained stable over time.52 In both surveys, about 80% of officers agreed or strongly agreed that it is clear how to implement the current policy. Similarly high percentages of officers felt that they had the knowledge, training, and skills to enforce the policy, including competence in asking questions about immigration status and in reviewing identification documents. Our discussions with personnel in various ranks throughout the Department also suggested that officers have a clear understanding of the policy and are very comfortable with implementing it.

51 Note that the figures presented here for the time 1 (2008) survey results differ slightly from those shown in our 2009 interim report because the results presented here are based on a subset of those officers who completed the time 1 survey. (The differences are generally very minor.) Also, unless otherwise stated, missing data were insubstantial (less than 5%) for each item.

52 A test of officers’ average scores for this full set of items showed no statistically meaningful change over time (see Appendix C).
Table 5-1. PWCPD Officers’ Knowledge and Implementation of the Current Immigration Policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently, I believe it is clear how to implement the PWC immigration policy.</td>
<td>82.4%</td>
<td>79.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe I have enough knowledge about the current policy to enforce the policy correctly.</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The training I have been provided by the PWCPD has adequately prepared me to enforce the PWC immigration policy.</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
<td>80.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My personal beliefs are supportive of the current PWC immigration policy.</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
<td>54.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My personal beliefs will have no effect on how to enforce any lawful PWC immigration policy.</td>
<td>92.2%</td>
<td>91.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When appropriate, I have the necessary skills to ask immigration status questions.</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
<td>88.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have the necessary skills to review identification (e.g., driver’s license) for fakes.</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Philosophically, officers also generally agree with the policy. At both points in time, more than half of the officers (54%-63%) agreed or strongly agreed that their personal beliefs were supportive of the policy. Only 9-10% disagreed with the policy at either time (the remainder neither agreed nor disagreed). Moreover, 92% of officers agreed in both surveys that their personal beliefs would have no effect on their implementation of the policy. Interviews with officers revealed further complexity in their views; many seem to feel that the policy is reasonable and prudent, although they also have sympathy for illegal immigrants seeking work and a decent living in PWC. Some noted that the current policy has also had the benefit of standardizing the Department’s approach to immigration inquiries, which helps to insulate the Department against charges of racial profiling. The focus groups in 2009 provided continued evidence of the officers’ support for the revised policy. The officers felt that the revised policy shows that the department has tried to do something to address the illegal immigration problem. The focus groups of patrol officers felt that on balance the policy has had the effect of driving many illegal immigrants out of the County.

5.2.2 Officers’ Experiences with Implementing the Policy

In the first survey, 63% of the respondents indicated that they had questioned at least one person about their immigration status during a police stop between July 1, 2008 and the time of the survey (October– November 2008). In our second survey approximately one year later, only 47% of these same respondents reported having questioned someone about immigration status during a police stop sometime during the prior year. This decline, which was statistically significant, indicates that officers have become less likely over time to question people about immigration status. This may reflect a change in officers’ behavior, a reduction in the prevalence of illegal immigrants, or some combination of the two.
Officers who had questioned anyone about immigration status were also asked to indicate the approximate number of people they had questioned. The responses included five categories ranging from one to 16 or more. As shown in Table 5-2, the distribution of responses was fairly similar in both surveys. At both points, the most common response, offered by roughly a third of officers, was that they had questioned 2-5 people about immigration status. About one quarter had questioned 6-10 according to each survey, and 19% to 28% had questioned 16 or more. However, considering that the reference period for T1 (roughly July 1, 2008 through October/November 2008) was notably shorter than that for T2 (one year), these results also suggest that officers were questioning people about immigration status more frequently during the early period of the policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>37.9%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 or more</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In both surveys, officers indicated that a majority of people they questioned about immigration status were Hispanic. However, the prevalence of Hispanics among these detainees declined over time. In the first survey, 83% of respondents indicated that more than 50% of the subjects they questioned were Hispanic. This percentage dropped to 68% in the second survey.

Officers generally reported that they were well prepared to handle these contacts. In both surveys, the vast majority of officers indicated that the training in immigration issues was “somewhat” helpful (53%-56%) or helpful “to a great extent” (25%-26%) in making immigration queries. Almost all of the officers were either “very confident” (53%-56%) or “somewhat confident” (39%-42%) in their ability to question a person on their immigration status.

53 At time 2, 10% of respondents could not recall whether they had questioned anyone about immigration status during the prior year. Among those who had questioned one or more persons about immigration status, 15% could not estimate the number.
54 We found no statistically significant difference over time in the proportion of officers who had questioned five or more people.
55 Note that these figures appear to include contacts with persons who were not illegal immigrants and who were not arrested. In the second survey, two-thirds of the officers that had questioned people about immigration status reported that they had arrested fewer than three-quarters of these subjects (this issue was not examined in the first survey). By way of comparison, over 80% of PWCPD’s contacts with officially-identified illegal immigrants result in arrest (unpublished data provided by PWCPD).
56 On a related note, we also analyzed data from PWCPD’s records management system to determine if there was a spike in traffic stops by PWCPD officers during March and April of 2008 when the original version of the policy (General Order 45) was in effect. Traffic stops rose during the latter part of 2007 and reached a new plateau in January 2008 (similarly, traffic citations increased 11% from 2007 to 2008—see PWCPD, 2009: 17). Traffic stops oscillated at higher levels throughout 2008 but did not spike in any pronounced way during March and April.
57 Among those officers who had questioned one or more persons about immigration status, about 8% could not recall the proportion of questioned persons who were Hispanic in the time 1 survey, and 11% could not recall in the time 2 survey.
Other survey items also suggest that officers have had, by and large, a positive or at least neutral experience with the current policy: in both surveys, about two-thirds of officers either agreed or strongly agreed that the immigration policy is a useful tool for PWCPD, and only about 11% to 13% felt that the policy is too restrictive (Table 5-3). Further, only about one-third of officers in each survey felt that the County should take a stronger stance against illegal immigration.

Table 5-3. Officer Perceptions of General Order 45.01

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Time 1 (2008): Agreed or Strongly Agreed</th>
<th>Time 2 (2009): Agreed or Strongly Agreed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The policy is a useful tool for PWCPD officers.</td>
<td>64.6%</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The policy is too restrictive for PWCPD officers to do their job.</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince William County should take a stronger stance against illegal immigration.</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Officers were also asked about their overall experience with General Order 45.01 on a five-point scale with response categories of “very positive”, “somewhat positive”, “neutral”, “somewhat negative”, and “very negative.” As shown in Table 5-4, 41% to 46% rated their overall experience with the policy as very or somewhat positive at each time point. About half rated their experience as neutral; few rated it as negative. Our discussions with PWCPD personnel suggest that the neutral response of many officers in the survey likely reflects a mixture of concerns including potentially negative consequences of the policy for police-community relations (see discussion below), doubts about the policy’s impact on crime, and, in some cases perhaps, empathy for the plight of some illegal immigrants. However, this stance also likely reflects the fact that the policy has had little impact on the everyday work of patrol officers, according to most patrol officers and other staff we interviewed. This is particularly true of the current policy. Officers indicated to us that they currently deal with immigrants in much the same way that they did before General Orders 45 and 45.01 were implemented. The policy has also had little if any impact on officers’ handling of calls, traffic stops, or other self-initiated activities.

Table 5-4. Officers’ Overall Experience with the Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Time 1 (2008): Very or somewhat positive</th>
<th>Time 2 (2009): Very or somewhat positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What has been your overall experience with General Order 45.01?</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

58 Most of the remainder neither agreed nor disagreed. Few respondents disagreed.
59 In the wave 1 survey, we also asked officers to contrast their experiences with the original version of the immigration policy (General Order 45) and the current version of the policy (General Order 45.01). These findings are discussed in our 2009 interim report. In short, officers did not draw stark differences between their experiences with the policies, but they seem to find the current policy easier to implement and appear to be doing somewhat fewer immigration checks under the current policy.
5.2.3 Officers’ Perceptions of the Policy’s Impact on the Community and Police-Community Relations

The officer surveys also had items assessing officers’ views of how the policy impacted the community and the Department’s relations with the community, particularly as the latter pertain to relations between PWCPD and the local immigrant community. As discussed earlier in this report, this issue has greatly concerned PWCPD’s leadership since the outset of the immigration debate in PWC.

As shown in Table 5-5, a substantial majority of officers in both surveys agreed or strongly agreed that the policy has caused illegal immigrants to leave PWC. However, this share dropped from 73% in the fall of 2008 to 66% in the fall of 2009, a statistically significant change. This is consistent with the notion that there has been some rebound in the illegal immigrant population as fear about the policy has ebbed (see discussion below). In contrast, officers were much less likely to believe that the policy has caused legal immigrants to leave PWC. In both surveys, roughly 36% to 40% agreed that the policy had caused legal immigrants to depart.

Table 5-5. Officers’ Perceptions of the Policy’s Impact on PWC’s Immigrant Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Time 1 (2008): Agree or Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Time 2 (2009): Agree or Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The policy has resulted in illegal immigrants leaving PWC.</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
<td>66.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The policy has resulted in legal immigrants leaving PWC.</td>
<td>40.1%</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Officers were also asked how commonly they had witnessed various problems or issues linked to the immigration issue using a four point scale of “regularly/all the time”, “often”, “occasionally”, and “never.” These items included several measures reflecting community attitudes towards the police and the community’s level of cooperation (or lack thereof) with PWCPD. As shown in Table 5-6, these problems ranged from negative attitudes towards the Department to attacks on officers. On average, officers reported that these problems occurred occasionally in both surveys, and there was little change over time in their ratings. Less than 5% of respondents ranked any of these problems as occurring regularly/all the time as of 2009, with the exception of crime reporting by illegal immigrants, which was rated as a regular problem by 10% of respondents (also see our discussion of crime reporting in Section 8).

We cannot say whether the problems in Table 5-6 have become more or less common since the immigration policy because we do not have measures of how officers perceived these problems before the policy. Nonetheless, our post-policy surveys suggest that these problems are not highly frequent and that they have remained relatively stable over the two years that the policy has been in effect.

---

60 This section of the survey also contained a number of items corresponding to crime and disorder problems. These items are discussed in Section 8. We created a scale based on the full set of items and found that the average score did not differ significantly across the two waves of officer surveys (see Appendix C).

61 As reported in our 2009 interim report, the fall 2008 survey also asked officers to compare the effects of the current and original versions of the policy (i.e., the July 1, 2008 and March 1, 2008 versions) on police relations with the immigrant community. While most respondents agreed that both policies had negatively impacted the Department’s relationship with the immigrant community in PWC, they were more likely to feel that relations have been better under the current policy than under the original policy.
Table 5-6. Frequency with which Officers Witnessed Problems between Police and the Community (1=never, 2=occasionally, 3=often, 4=regularly/all the time).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charges of biased policing against PWCPD.</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative feelings directed against the PWCPD by PWC residents.</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor relations with the legal immigrant community in PWC.</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in forming community policing partnerships between the police and the immigrant community.</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems getting non-immigrant residents of PWC to report crime.</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems getting legal immigrant residents of PWC to report crime.</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems getting illegal immigrant residents of PWC to report crime.</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems getting witnesses to cooperate with the police.</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical attacks against officers.</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal threats against officers.</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low levels of support among most PWC residents for this policy.</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More difficulty in recruiting minority candidates to join PWCPD.</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3 Officers’ Views and Experiences with Regard to the Immigration Policy: Interview and Focus Group Results

Below, we complement the survey results with insights obtained from focus groups conducted with PWCPD personnel at various points from 2008 through 2010. In 2008, we conducted focus groups with sworn personnel at all levels of PWCPD (ranging from patrol officers to the Department’s command staff). In the summer of 2009, we conducted follow-up focus groups with patrol officers, supervisors, and mid-level managers. We then held follow-up interviews with PWCPD’s commanders and recruitment staff in early 2010.

5.3.1 Implementation Issues

Representatives of PWCPD interviewed by the project team identified few serious operational problems associated with the implementation of General Orders 45 and 45.01. Although these policies may have had a large impact on the perceptions of PWC residents, according to PWCPD
personnel, they have been small changes in operational terms. This is particularly true of the current policy (General Order 45.01), which makes minor changes to the procedures and paperwork that follow an arrest. Below, we review some of the points that arose in our discussions of day-to-day operational challenges and issues.

The command staff focus groups revealed no important changes to the policy since the main revision (General Order 45.01). The commanders noted that there have been some “housekeeping and administrative” issues associated with the policy but no major implementation problems. The main concern that emerged was the proper use of the field interview card and having officers complete these cards appropriately when handling illegal immigrants. In early 2010, the command staff conducted an extensive audit of field interview cards for 2009 and found that officer compliance in filling out the cards had dropped. This necessitated a reemphasis on the issue within the Department.

Beyond this, commanders indicated that there were very few incidents involving problems related to the implementation of the policy. In one incident, a woman was arrested when she was not able to produce what the officer considered to be a legitimate driver’s license. As it turns out, she was the wife of a diplomat and had a driver’s license issued by the U.S. State Department that the arresting officer did not recognize. The PWCPD ended up apologizing to the woman, as did the arresting officer, who was also disciplined. There were also two other incidents involving immigrants but they were not directly related to the implementation of the policy.62

An initial eight-hour block of training on the original policy was provided to all sworn staff. With the policy in place, the training of the policy is handled as a four-hour block in basic training, and no other formal in-service training has been deemed necessary. Issues associated with the policy are handled during roll calls (e.g., the importance of completing field interview cards, further instruction on the loitering ordinance as it relates to laborer sites, and what counts as proper identification during a police stop). New officers receive training on the policy as part of their training in the police academy.

For the command staff, however, the policy has placed a tremendous toll on their time (although this burden has gradually lessened), including: time working with community groups answering questions, various speaking engagements, and preparing officers for its likely impact. Senior commanders also review almost all the field interview cards related to the policy. This work by senior staff has continued through 2010.

Officers interviewed for the focus groups (in 2008 and 2009) were mixed in their view on the effectiveness of the policy, but most of them felt that the policy was not difficult to implement (e.g., most felt that the field interview cards could be completed in about five minutes, and they had little trouble asking the illegal immigration questions of arrestees), except if extensive communication

62 In one incident at a Hispanic baptism party where officers were responding to noise complaints, officers used a stun gun on the home owner and others at the party. While the officers were judged to have been within the Department’s use-or-force policy guidelines, the incident resulted in bad publicity that got the attention of the national media and required meetings with a number of foreign consuls over the incident. In another prominent incident at an informal day laborer site (parking lot), officers arrested some Hispanic day laborers for loitering. The issue that emerged in this case was that the officers did not give a proper warning to the laborers first. This incident received significant press coverage as a case of biased policing.
with the suspected illegal alien was required (there is still a shortage of Spanish speaking officers in PWCPD). The officers in the focus groups were unaware of any cases where officers were not following the policy or otherwise ignoring a suspect’s potential illegal status. Also, the officers provided anecdotes on some successes associated with the Department’s heightened efforts in addressing illegal immigration. For example, one officer mentioned a case where an illegal immigrant that the PWCPD had arrested was linked to a kidnapping/smuggling case in Texas. In this case, PWCPD was able to provide police in Texas with information to aid a kidnapped person being held for ransom.

Initially, there were concerns within PWCPD that the policy would place substantial time burdens on patrol officers. For instance, there was concern that time spent by patrol officers on immigration checks would lead to slower response times to calls and less proactive work by officers. Personnel with whom we spoke felt that these fears were not realized. However, the initial policy, which posed a greater risk of this possibility (officers noted that this version of the policy was more complex and time consuming), was only in effect for two months, which may have been too short a time for such impacts to be fully felt. Over time, officers continued to feel that there were no noticeable effects from the policy on calls for service, nor did the policy seem to affect the officers’ ability to do proactive work. It is not that the officers do not come into contact with illegal immigrants. Many officers in fact have at least weekly contact with suspected illegal aliens (especially in the areas of public intoxication and other low level offenses). Instead, officers are getting better at managing the calls related to illegal immigrants and their service to the community is not being slowed.

The officers in the focus groups had noted little change in the calls for service related to the new policy. The biggest issue in the handling of calls-for-service has not been the new policy but the lack of more new officers related to the canceling of academy classes associated with cutbacks in the County’s budget. Budgetary cutbacks in PWC have led to a loss of officer positions through attrition and the restricted use of overtime funds. As in other areas, the effects of the policy are difficult to separate from the effects of the lagging economy.

Nevertheless, command staff have continued to express concerns about the cumulative effect on the Department’s resources of time spent by officers filling out field interview cards, running immigration checks on arrestees, and arresting and processing illegal immigrants for minor violations that would normally result in a summons (such as traffic offenses). Further, planning and implementation of the policy has required considerable time and effort from PWCPD’s command staff, which has diverted some of their attention from other matters including crime fighting. That being said, analyses presented elsewhere in this report suggest that these demands have not undermined the Department’s effectiveness in controlling crime or in maintaining high levels of satisfaction among most residents of PWC. Further, the Department’s outreach efforts seem to have helped repair much of the damage that the policy did to its relationship with the immigrant community in PWC.

The need for Spanish-speaking officers and translators has also been an ongoing challenge (from the early stages of the policy through 2010), as it is for many departments across the country. While PWCPD has taken a number of steps to increase the number of Spanish speaking officers (they recruit officers at Hispanic cultural events and offer a five percent increase in pay for officers that speak Spanish and pass a Spanish test), it had only 20 to 25 officers as of our 2010 interviews that were receiving extra pay for speaking Spanish. (Below, we review data on PWCPD’s use of language translation services.)
Finally, personnel that we interviewed generally had few recommendations for changing the policy. However, a few in the early focus groups felt that further community education efforts about the policy and about the process for becoming a citizen would be helpful.

### 5.3.2 Effects on the Community and Police–Community Relations

Interviews and focus groups with PWCPD personnel in 2008 indicated that both the announcement of the policy in July 2007 and the implementation of the first policy in March 2008 created a substantial amount of fear and distrust of police in the Hispanic community in PWC. This was aggravated by misunderstandings and misinformation about the policy in the Hispanic community. In particular, there was a misperception among some in the immigrant community that the PWCPD would be seeking out illegal immigrants. Many officers felt that this contributed to an outflow of immigrants from PWC, though the declining economy in the county was also thought to have caused much of this out-migration. Some officers also perceived that crime victims and witnesses in the Hispanic community were more reluctant to cooperate with police for fear that police would check their immigration status. Overall in the interviews, officers reported that the net effect of the policy on police-immigrant relations had been negative.

At the same time, PWCPD personnel also believed that this situation had improved by the latter part of 2008 due to the Department’s educational outreach efforts—including dissemination of informational materials, attendance at community meetings, and recruitment efforts in the Hispanic community—and to its everyday interactions with residents and workers. A telling example of these changes came from an officer who described how in the early days of the policy Hispanic restaurant patrons would stop their meals and leave when he and other officers entered a restaurant. At one of these establishments, the officer and his colleagues talked at length about the policy with the restaurant’s Hispanic owner, who in turn conveyed this information to her customers and others she knew in the community. Following this, the officer saw fewer signs that patrons in the restaurant were fearful of the police; on the contrary, officers felt that they could interact informally with patrons without causing fear. Anecdotally, officers also reported seeing other signs that fear and distrust were easing among immigrants. These included improvements in daily interactions with immigrants and a modest rebound in persons at day laborer sites.

Our interviews and focus groups in 2009 and 2010 suggest that this progress has continued. While the earlier 2008 focus groups reported tensions in the community based on the new policy, by the time of the 2009 focus groups with patrol officers, there was not much attention to the issue of the immigration policy in the community. The officers felt that the deteriorating economy and associated collapse in jobs related to home building were having more of an effect on illegal aliens leaving the County than was the policy. The officers felt that many illegal immigrants had left PWC during the early phase of the immigration policy, but that over time fewer illegal immigrants were leaving.

---

63 As described in footnote 56, traffic stops by PWCPD increased considerably from 2007 to 2008 (as did traffic citations—see PWCPD, 2009: 17), and this may have fueled fears about enforcement of the policy. However, this increase (which could reflect increases in both proactive policing and traffic violations) began in 2007, and there was no indication of a surge corresponding to the implementation of the policy.

64 In this sense, the policy has arguably hurt PWCPD’s community policing efforts. However, officers have also pointed out that the Department’s community policing efforts have suffered more generally due to rising demands for police service. This trend, combined with the Department’s growing emphasis on the use of special units to address street crime, has limited the time that officers have for conducting proactive activities and for interacting informally with residents and workers.
and some were even coming back. The officers in the focus groups felt that there was some anec-
dotal evidence of the illegal immigrants leaving the County after the policy was established such as
fewer “hit and run” accidents (also see Section 8), fewer laborers at labor sites, and fewer complaints
about overcrowding in houses and public urination. As the home building industry has rekindled,
more illegal immigrants seem to be coming back to PWC, based on officer comments in the 2009
focus groups. Also, some local night clubs that were associated with illegal aliens had most of their
customer base disappear in the early days of the new policy, but by 2010 the officers in the focus
groups were reporting these clubs back closer to pre-policy levels. The focus group officers had
similar observations in 2009 related to local Hispanic soccer teams (14 soccer teams down to zero
and back to 8 teams as of 2009). The focus group officers noted that many immigrants began to
recognize that the police are not rounding up immigrants and that the policy is being implemented
fairly. For those reasons, immigrants have started to return to PWC.

Some of the earlier concerns about lack of cooperation from the Hispanic community and other
racial tensions that were voiced in the 2008 focus groups were not issues for the later focus groups,
who felt these problems had largely disappeared. The officers in the 2009 focus groups felt that the
topic of illegal immigrants had waned a bit and that it is not a big issue in the community. Much of
the fervor associated with the vocal policy advocacy of the anti-immigrant groups has died down (by
the time of the 2009 focus groups, it was hardly noticeable to officers).

Officers in the focus groups (in 2008 and especially in 2009) felt that a key factor in the implementa-
tion of the policy has been the waning of the topic of illegal immigrants in the local media in PWC.
They felt that much of the early problems associated with the policy were related to the media
“fanning the flames” and that once the media lost interest in the topic, the implementation of the
policy became much easier.

In the early days of the policy, officers sometimes found themselves in antagonistic situations
involving people on different sides of the immigration issue and had to manage these interactions
carefully. We heard about a few instances of native residents trying to provoke situations with
immigrants (in order to draw police involvement) and of people filming police with the intent of
criticizing them for being too lenient or too aggressive with suspected immigrants. Such incidents
have not been common, however, and may no longer be occurring. We did not hear about any such
incidents during our follow-up interviews in 2009 and 2010.

Our ride-alongs with police officers in the summer of 2010 bore this out, as we witnessed many
cordial or even friendly interactions on the street between Hispanic residents and the non-Hispanic
officers with whom we rode. Of course, it is possible that the officers with whom we rode for the
evening shifts may have been exceptional; but none of the officers or supervisors we talked with in
the course of our 2010 ride-alongs felt that communication with Hispanic residents was a major
problem in their daily policing work.

Similarly, officers felt that the policy prompted more calls early on about trespassing, loitering, and
other such matters by people and businesses who believed that the police would remove illegal
immigrants or scare them away. In essence, some community members tried to use the policy—and
the police—as a tool for dealing with problems (real or perceived) that they had with immigrants.
This was cited as more of a problem at the outset of the policy, however, and our analysis of trends
in calls for service in Section 8 suggests that it has not significantly affected trends in calls to police.
Therefore, increases in calls prompted by the policy may not have been particularly large or may
have faded over time. While there are still calls from residents complaining about suspected illegal
immigrants committing code violations (e.g., overcrowding in houses), officers seemed to feel by 2009 that there were generally few complaints about illegal immigrants by average residents.

The officers felt that the Hispanic immigrant community was very hesitant in the early days of the policy, but once they realized that the policy was going to be implemented fairly they became more accepting of the policy and more welcoming to the police. The 2009 focus group felt that satisfaction with the policy was continuing to move upwards. The focus group of commanders in 2010 also indicated that many residents complemented the Department on keeping a middle ground on the issue of illegal immigration. Notwithstanding, they noted that the Department’s relationship with the community was hurt on both sides. While the criticism of the police is no longer evident, the relationship between the police and the community still has to be worked on to fully heal. Many of the officers across the ranks indicated in the focus groups that the Department is likely to continue to receive extra scrutiny because of the policy and that it will take some time before the “cloud over Prince William moves on.” Similarly, while the 2009 and 2010 focus groups did not raise crime reporting by immigrants as a significant issue, additional officer survey results presented in Section 8 reveal some continuing problems with this.

The focus group officers also talked about the drop in street robberies during the period of the new policy. The officers indicated that the Department’s street robbery reduction program was more likely to have caused this than was the immigration policy. That program had undercover detectives, involved seizures of guns off the streets, hot spot policing, education with the community, lectures on victimization, and directed patrol. The police also worked with the Hispanic population who were often the robbery victims.

A final but critical point is that there have been few complaints against PWCPD arising from the immigration checks according to PWCPD command staff. Other PWCPD personnel that we interviewed from 2008 through 2010 also felt that there had been few if any instances of overzealous officers using the policy (in either version) to target illegal immigrants inappropriately or aggressively. As of this writing, the issue of racial profiling or bias had been raised in only one lawsuit against the Department, and those accusations, which had been raised secondarily in the case, were dismissed by the court.

5.4 The Activities and Experiences of the Criminal Alien Unit (CAU)

The second component of PWCPD’s immigration policy has been the establishment of a Criminal Alien Unit (CAU). Comprising six detectives (one of whom is a supervisor for the unit) and a crime analyst as of 2010, this unit focuses on the apprehension and deportation of serious offenders who are legal or illegal immigrants and on special projects like the investigation of “identification mills” that produce false identification cards such as drivers’ licenses or green cards. Members of this unit received federal 287(g) training and status, which makes them federally deputized officers with the authority to process illegal immigrants on behalf of ICE. The CAU thus expands the capabilities of ICE while also benefiting PWCPD by facilitating more certain and swift action against immigrants who commit serious crimes.

The unit, which began operations in March of 2008 and works closely with PWCPD’s gang unit, identifies targets through intelligence gathering and reviews of field interview cards, warrants, and

---

65 Police-citizen encounters observed by project staff also suggest that officers give subjects a fair amount of leeway before making formal inquiries into their immigration status. For example, officers seem inclined to give loiterers a warning and an opportunity to leave the vicinity before interviewing them with field cards.
probationers. CAU focuses on “aggravated felonies” (i.e., murder, rape, sex abuse of a minor, drug trafficking, pandering, and other violent or theft offenses with a sentence of one year or more) and crimes of “moral turpitude” (i.e., assaults against police or family, sex offenses, theft, and fraud). Like the rest of the Department, the unit does not conduct sweeps of day labor sites or other such round ups. In conducting their work, they consider factors like seriousness of offense, criminal history, gang membership, and drug involvement. In addition to investigating document mills, CAU has also investigated houses of prostitution (fronting as massage parlors) that employed illegal immigrants. Occasionally, they become involved in cases at the arrest stage if requested by a patrol officer. Jail officers also contact them from time to time about illegal immigrants who are suspected gang members.

As of July 2009, CAU had issued 120 detainers (or about 7 per month), and they reported making about 30 arrests of all sorts per month. Each immigration case is very labor intensive; CAU staff estimate that it takes 16 officer-hours to conduct 287(g) processing of one person. CAU must also transport subjects to an ICE facility in Merrifield, VA.

Besides the time-consuming nature of their cases, operational problems noted by CAU members included delays in acquiring and connecting ICE computers (the unit did not receive its computers until June 2008), complexities and problems in using ICE computers, adapting to changes in ICE protocols, and the accessibility of their initial liaison from ICE during their early months of operation. However, the unit does not appear to have encountered particularly serious obstacles or problems that have impeded their efforts.

Although their working relationship with ICE appears to be good, members of CAU did acknowledge a lack of communication that exists between CAU and other staff of PWCPD. This problem seems to have persisted mainly with patrol and the CAU unit from the early stages of implementation of the policy through 2010 (the CAU officers felt that their working relationship with other special units has been very good). CAU officers noted that their cases are not publicized and, consequently, others in the Department have little knowledge of what CAU does. Indeed, this theme arose in our interviews with other members of the rank and file of PWCPD, many of whom had little knowledge of the unit’s activities and questioned whether the allocation of six officers to the unit was worthwhile, especially since those positions were not backfilled as originally intended. Some officers wish to have more information about CAU’s activities and for CAU to become more involved in supporting and assisting patrol officers at the street level, perhaps even assisting with monitoring of day labor sites. The patrol officers we spoke with had not worked with the CAU, though they also had not handled cases requiring CAU’s assistance.

The CAU officers felt over time that there have been some improvements in their relationship with patrol. Some of these improvements are related to the in-service trainings that CAU does for officers on issues related to illegal immigration (e.g., identifying counterfeit identification) and some are related to support that CAU provides in the field for patrol and other units. Nonetheless, all the levels of officers participating in the focus groups in 2008 and 2009 noted that they knew little about

---

66 These designations are based on federal immigration law, which states that illegal immigrants are ineligible for bond when they have been convicted of an aggravated felony or at least two crimes of moral turpitude (see Motlir, 2008 as presented in PWCPD, 2008a).
67 CAU members estimate that the share of gang members who are illegal immigrants can vary from 0% to 50% among the County’s numerous gangs.
68 Our description of CAU’s cases is based on our discussion with the unit and not upon an analysis of their cases.
the work of the CAU; some even had negative comments about the effectiveness of the CAU and what they are accomplishing.

Command staff stressed that they wish to keep CAU focused on serious crimes and plan to be careful about expansion of CAU’s duties. As of 2010, the CAU had maintained their focus on serious crimes, but more recently they have also been more involved in addressing prostitution cases involving immigrants (many of whom are Korean or Chinese and are in PWC legally).

The CAU generates most of its cases through proactive investigations and referrals from other agencies. The field interview cards completed by mostly patrol officers have not been a good source of intelligence for the CAU. The FI Cards are mostly useful for statistical tracking purposes. The processing of illegal immigration cases still through 2010 continues to be a very time consuming process for the CAU officers. Processing often takes two CAU officers working two full days, but the majority of the CAU’s cases where they detain an illegal alien lead to a deportation or prosecution (but these cases can take months or years to go through the federal system). The CAU’s relationship with ICE is still good and has developed to an even stronger relationship over time through 2010, despite the fact that the network connection for the CAU officers and the ICE databases is still not very good. Also, ICE seems to be good at communicating with the PWCPD when ICE officers do their occasional sweeps/raids for illegal immigrants in the County.

5.5 Other Departmental Issues

5.5.1 Minority Recruitment

Recruitment and retention of officers is a major enterprise at PWCPD, consisting of 13 personnel (recruiters, background investigators, polygraph personnel, and administration of the unit). The main issue PWCPD recruitment faces is getting a sufficient number of quality applications. There is no shortage of applications, just quality applicants. The unit has not been getting better applications, despite the rising unemployment rate (the recruiters told our research team that they speculated that local organizations are shedding mostly their lower quality employees and that others are not leaving their positions). Over the last several years (back to 2006-2007), applications have been consistent (1,050-1,200) before and after policy.

A concern for PWCPD at the outset of its immigration policy was that the policy might hurt the Department’s efforts to recruit minorities, particularly Hispanics. However, this has not been the case. Figures provided by PWCPD’s Personnel Bureau show that 156 Hispanics applied to PWCPD during the 21 months prior to the implementation of the Department’s immigration enforcement efforts (May 2006 – February 2008). This figure increased to 208 during the 21 months following the implementation of the policy (March 2008 – December 2009). During this same span of time, the share of applicants who were Hispanic also increased slightly from 13% to 14%.

Hispanic representation among academy recruits (i.e., persons hired) is lower but has also held steady. Hispanics accounted for 9% of recruits in the three academy classes hired just before the policy’s implementation (January 2007, July 2007, and January 2008) and 8% of recruits in the next three classes, which spanned through early 2010 (July 2008, January 2009, and January 2010).69

69 Though based on small numbers, it is perhaps noteworthy that the share of recruits that were Hispanic fell in each of the three classes leading up to the policy (from 18% in January 2007 to 8% in July 2007 to 3% in January 2008) and then rose over the next three classes (from 4% in July 2008 to 7% in January 2009 to 14% in January 2010).
Finally, the overall percentage of PWCPD officers who are Hispanic has increased somewhat over the last two years, from 6.6% in January 2008 to 7.4% in January 2010.

Although PWCPD would like to increase its representation of Hispanics and other minorities, these trends suggest that the policy has not hurt the Department’s efforts in this regard. PWCPD’s recruiting staff makes extensive efforts to target minorities in their selection of recruitment events and advertising, and this has perhaps helped to offset any negative impacts that the policy might otherwise have had on recruitment of minorities and Hispanics. PWCPD recruiters have also had initiatives targeting venues for Hispanics, Blacks and women. For example, the agency website has changed to target more women and minorities, testimonials from women and minorities are a part of the recruiting materials, and recruiters attend special minority festivals and career fairs. As another illustration, PWCPD recruiters made appearances on Radio Fiesta, a Hispanic radio program, nearly every month from August 2007 through September 2008. This gave recruiters an opportunity to both explain the Department’s immigration policy to the Hispanic community and bolster Hispanic recruitment. PWCPD recruiters with whom we spoke also indicated that they had not seen or heard anything specific about the policy having negative effects on recruitment. They also noted that many Hispanic officers in PWCPD are military veterans or persons who have lived in PWC for a considerable length of time. The policy may be less likely to affect sentiment toward the police among Hispanics from such backgrounds.

Overall, the recruitment staff interviewed by the research team did not feel that the illegal immigration policy had any effect on recruitment for good or ill. As in other areas, the recruiters felt that the economic crisis has been a major factor in affecting hiring trends in PWCPD, not the illegal immigration policy.

5.5.2 Use of Language Translation Services

As discussed in Section 7.2, PWCPD and 911 dispatchers in the County have used a telephonic language interpretation service to assist officers and dispatchers in communicating with non-English speakers since 2006. At peak times during 2006, officers and dispatch personnel used the interpretation service as often as 800 to 900 times per month (see Figure 7-5). The vast majority of these calls were for assistance with Spanish speakers.

It was anticipated that the immigration policy might affect the use of this service in a number of possible ways. If the policy prompted officers to conduct more stops, field interviews, and immigration checks of Hispanics, it would have led to substantial increases in the use of the language line and in the costs for its use (including monetary costs and lost time). If, on the other hand, the policy caused Hispanics, particularly those who were illegal immigrants, to leave the County and/or made them less likely to call police, then the need for the service would have declined.

Trends shown in Figure 7-5 are more consistent with the latter possibilities. After a number of ups and downs during 2006 and early 2007, use of the language service declined fairly consistently from the latter half of 2007 (following the PWC Board of County Supervisors’ announcement of the policy in July 2007) through the latter part of 2008. From that point, usage stabilized through early 2010, generally varying between 250 and 400 calls per month.\(^{70}\)

\(^{70}\) From May 2006 through April 2010, PWCPD also used a Spanish “rehire” team of on-call bilingual officers who received overtime pay for helping with these situations. Based on its dates of operation, the deployment of this team does not appear to have impacted the trends shown in Figure 7-5 (however, we do not have data
5.5.3 Costs of the Policy

The immigration policy has also imposed significant start-up and ongoing costs on PWCPD. As noted earlier, the costs of the Department’s start-up activities tallied $1.3 million as of the fall of 2008. In addition, PWCPD reports that its ongoing annual costs are between $700,000 and $750,000. These costs cover staffing of the CAU, ongoing training for officers, participation in various community events, and evaluation efforts (notably, funding for this study). Hence, costs to PWCPD as of this writing have been on the order of $2.7 to $2.8 million.71

A related point also noted previously is that PWCPD’s command staff has expressed concern about the cumulative effects of time burdens that the policy has placed on the Department. PWCPD reports that its senior staff has collectively spent thousands of hours planning and executing the Department’s implementation strategy, participating in community meetings (before and since the policy’s implementation), responding to inquiries from community groups, the media, and other entities of local government (such as the County Board of Supervisors), responding to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, and monitoring implementation of the policy (e.g., reviewing field interview cards). These activities have diverted senior staff from other managerial duties, potentially affecting other aspects of the Department’s performance.

Officers in the field must also undertake additional tasks such as filling out field interview cards when they encounter suspected illegal immigrants. Although officers have not felt heavily burdened by the policy, PWCPD recognizes that some of the illegal immigrants they arrest must be taken into custody for offenses that could otherwise result in a summons (e.g., traffic violations), were it not for their status as illegal immigrants. The time that officers spend processing each of these arrests is normally 1.5 to 2 hours. In addition, PWCPD estimates that Spanish-speaking officers are needed for translation in about half of the arrests involving illegal immigrants, which typically adds an additional hour of officer time per arrest.

In assessing these burdens, the most critical issue is arguably whether they have detracted from the Department’s ability to prevent crime and provide other quality services. Indeed, one may argue that the additional arrests have had some value in reducing crime. While these questions are hard to answer definitively, our analyses of crime and citizen satisfaction with police (see Sections 8 and 10) suggest that the demands of implementing the policy have not undermined PWCPD’s ability to control crime or reduced satisfaction with other police services among most PWC residents.

5.6 Summary

To summarize, PWCPD undertook thorough measures to prepare internally for the implementation of the policy and to educate the community about the policy. Implementation of the policy has generally gone smoothly. Officers have been comfortable implementing the policy, particularly in its current form, and it does not seem to have had a major impact on their work. The CAU, for its part, has played a modest but important role in the Department’s immigration enforcement efforts, focusing on proactive investigation of more serious offenders in coordination with ICE. Although the policy has placed additional burdens and costs on PWCPD, and especially on its command staff, on the volume of the team’s operations). PWCPD discontinued the team in the spring of 2010 due to budgetary constraints; at least one officer who had participated in the program reported that usage of the “rehire” officer services had been declining as the program reached an end.

71 Financial costs to ADC from its participation in the 287(g) program are discussed in Section 6.
the agency seems to have adapted well to these demands (further illustrations of this are contained in the coming sections on crime and community satisfaction with police).

PWCPD personnel believe that the policy initially caused fear in the immigrant community, thereby contributing to the exodus of immigrants from the County and undermining the immigrant community’s trust of the Department. However, PWCPD personnel feel that their outreach efforts and their administration of the policy have helped to ease these fears and at least begun to restore the agency’s relationship with the immigrant community. Generally, officers rate their relationship with the community as being good; they regard most problems with police-community relations as only occasional. Further, some of the Department’s initial concerns that the policy would hurt recruitment efforts and increase racial bias complaints have not been realized. The change from General Order 45 to General Order 45.01 (which was made by the PWC Board County Supervisors at PWCPD’s urging) and PWCPD’s efforts to implement the policy in a professional and impartial manner have almost certainly helped to stem the latter. Nevertheless, the policy continues to be an issue that hangs over PWC and PWCPD and that can magnify the impact of problems (and problem incidents) for PWCPD.
6 The Experiences of the Judiciary, Jail, and ICE in Processing Illegal Immigrants in Prince William County

In this section, we examine the experiences of other criminal justice organizations that handle illegal immigrants in PWC. Although we were not tasked with evaluating the policies and practices of these organizations, their operations are relevant because they have ramifications for the outcomes of PWCPD’s efforts and for assessing the overall impact of PWC and State of Virginia policies that deal with crime and immigration. Our discussion focuses on: 1) magistrates and the judiciary; 2) the local jail (ADC); and 3) the federal Immigrations and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE).72

6.1 Magistrates and the Judiciary

As discussed in Section 4, PWCPD officers bring arrestees before state-appointed magistrates who make decisions about pre-trial release and bail. Magistrates take immigration status into account in their decisions, but they are not required to detain suspected illegal immigrants who do not have either an ICE detainer or a previous felony conviction that resulted in deportation.

Magistrates answer directly to State of Virginia circuit court judges and are not under the control of PWC officials. Although they were not consulted during the development of the PWC immigration policy, magistrates work with PWPCD and ADC officials in processing illegal immigrants. Magistrates typically give officers time to complete immigration checks when the officers suspect that an arrestee is an illegal immigrant. When they take arrestees before the magistrates, PWCPD officers, in turn, inform the magistrates of the arrestees’ immigration status. Although magistrates release some suspected illegal immigrants on personal recognizance, we did not hear complaints about this from PWCPD officers. Suspected illegal immigrants released by magistrates appear to be minor offenders who pose a low risk of subsequent offending or failure to appear in court.73 Officers from ADC’s 287(g) unit (see below) also coordinate with magistrates when needed to prevent the release of arrestees with ICE detainers who have been detained in ADC but are scheduled to be released on bail.74 In sum, the immigration policies of PWCPD and ADC seem to have had little direct or indirect effect on magistrates, nor have the magistrates’ actions had much impact on the implementation of these policies by PWCPD and ADC.

Based on anecdotal accounts from police officers, one problematic issue involving the judiciary more generally is that judges sometimes dismiss criminal cases against illegal immigrants, presumably to relieve strain on the justice system, based on the expectation that the immigrants will be deported anyway. If such an offender later returns to the community—as PWCPD officers have witnessed in at least few cases—the prior case will not be on his record, thus preventing police and prosecutors from using it against him should he commit a new offense. A related point is that judges sometimes forego a sentence of incarceration for immigrant offenders that plead guilty and can be deported. We do not have data on the prevalence of either of these types of cases, but we recommend that PWCPD, prosecutors, and the judiciary make efforts to track them.75

72 See Section 4 for a general description of the processing of illegal immigrants by magistrates and ADC.
73 However, we do not have specific statistics on this issue.
74 This could occur in cases where the initial PWCPD check did not reveal the ICE detainer, perhaps due to problems in making a definitive identification of an arrestee.
75 On a related note, ADC data discussed in Section 4 suggest that fewer than 9% of illegal immigrants processed by ADC are later returned to ADC for new offenses.
6.2 The Prince William – Manassas Regional Adult Detention Center (ADC)

The ADC serves as the local jail for PWC and for the cities of Manassas and Manassas Park. The ADC is overseen by a Regional Jail Board that consists of ten members including the PWC Sheriff, seven members appointed by the PWC Board of County Supervisors, and two members appointed by the Manassas City Council. The ADC and Regional Jail Board operate under authority of state law. When the 287(g) program began operating at the ADC in July 2007, the facility had the capacity to house approximately 500 inmates, with an additional 100 housed in its work-release center (Prince William-Manassas Regional Adult Detention Center, 2007). ADC housed additional inmates at other regional and local facilities when needed due to space limitations. A new central ADC facility with an operational capacity of 667 persons was opened near the end of 2008 (see http://www.co.prince-william.va.us/default.aspx?topic=040048), which has helped to alleviate crowding problems that were at one point also aggravated by the processing of illegal immigrants (see below). ADC’s average daily population in 2009 was 878.

ADC selected a group of officers for 287(g) training in 2007 and began running 287(g) checks on inmates in July 2007. ADC statistics show that by April 2008, the 287(g) unit was running immigration checks on all (or virtually all) persons of foreign birth committed to the facility (see Section 4). The 287(g) unit recently acquired a new officer, bringing its total to 12. ADC officers conduct their own inquiries into immigration status; communication with PWPCD about the latter’s checks on the immigration status of arrestees is informal, according to ADC officials. Also, the ADC 287(g) unit does not handle cases being processed by PWCPD’s 287(g) unit (the CAU). ADC’s 287(g) officers issued 2,783 detainers and released 2,499 people to ICE through June 2010 (see Section 4). As noted in Section 4, ADC officials do not know how many of these subjects have been deported by ICE.

ADC’s 287(g) unit now operates in the new jail facility and is physically located closer to the jail’s intake unit (as are the magistrates that operate in the facility). Initially, the 287(g) unit operated from 5:00 a.m. to midnight, but its operations were expanded to 24 hours a day in October 2008. Operations at the jail have also been enhanced since 2008 by the introduction of the automated LIVESCAN fingerprint and photograph matching system, which links to federal data systems. LIVESCAN has helped with the identification and verification of suspected illegal immigrants’ identity for a history in the justice system. Through the recent Secure Communities project (see Section 4), LIVESCAN matches the fingerprints of arrestees to ICE databases, among others.

The 287(g) jail unit is now supervised by the ICE’s Office of Detention and Removal, which has a person on site for a few hours every day during the work week. ICE also provides daily pickups of individuals on whom the 287(g) has placed immigration detainers. Some of those individuals (e.g., low risk illegal aliens) are released in Prince William County rather than being transferred to another facility and released there.

The 287(g) program has imposed costs on ADC. Costs for the program over its first three fiscal years were approximately $3.5 million, and ADC has had to divert people from other functions to

---

76 Prior to the start of ADC’s 287(g) program, ADC officers cooperated with ICE agents more informally, primarily by coordinating on the handling of inmates with immigration detainers.
staff the 287(g) unit. However, the federal government does compensate ADC for the additional detention time necessary for preparing detainers and holding illegal immigrants for ICE.

At an earlier stage of the program, slow follow-up by ICE also exacerbated crowding conditions at ADC and contributed to an increase in ADC inmates sent to other regional and local jails (referred to as “farm-outs”). “Immigration prisoner days” per month—i.e., the time spent by illegal immigrants in ADC for detainers after the closing of their state and/or local charges—increased from an average of 11 in 2007 to 29 in 2008, before declining to 7 in 2009 (unpublished data provided by ADC). This also may have contributed to an overall increase in ADC’s average daily population from 731 in 2006 to 736 in 2007 to 742 during the first 10 months of 2008 (before full operation of ADC’s new facility). This issue was resolved, however, through a Memorandum of Agreement between ICE and ADC, and ICE agents now pick up (or allow the release) of 287(g) cases within 48 hours. An ICE agent works closely with the 287(g) unit and is regularly on-site at ADC. In other respects, the ADC’s 287(g) program appears to work smoothly, despite day-to-day difficulties that make the 287(g) process rather time consuming (complications in using federal data systems, dealing with language barriers, etc.) and periodic adjustments required by turnover among ICE staff.

6.3 The Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency

The federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) is the primary agency responsible for the enforcement of federal immigration laws. Illegal immigrants processed by 287(g) personnel in PWCPD and ADC are eventually transferred to ICE agents, who then decide whether or not to prosecute and/or deport them. Coordination between ICE and both PWPCD and ADC is governed by a Memorandum of Agreement.

Two ICE divisions, the Office of Investigations (OI) and the Office of Detention and Removal (DRO) work with PWC on immigration issues. OI is responsible for the investigation of criminal activity by immigrants, and it oversees the cases of PWCPD’s Criminal Alien Unit (CAU). Until September 2008, OI was also tasked with handling illegal immigrants processed by ADC. This task has been assumed by DRO, which is responsible for housing incarcerated immigrants and physically removing illegal and criminal immigrants from the country.

ICE officials have stressed to PWC that their focus is on immigrants, both legal and illegal, who are serious offenders or repeat immigration violators (i.e., persons who have been deported previously). Trying to deport all illegal immigrants in PWC and elsewhere in the country would simply overwhelm the agency. Accordingly, ICE officials state that the agency often uses release on recognizance or electronic monitoring for illegal immigrants who have not committed serious offenses and who have not previously been deported (also see Schriro, 2009). They also note that there are also various waivers under which federal immigration judges may allow illegal immigrants to remain in the country (e.g., an impending marriage or the presence of strong community ties). Further, ICE does not take juvenile cases. All of this suggests that many illegal immigrants arrested by PWCPD and processed by ADC for minor offenses are not likely to be deported from the country. However, specific figures on the outcomes of illegal immigration cases from PWC are unavailable. To date, officials from PWCPD and ADC have been unable to acquire this information from ICE, which

---

77 A few of the full-time equivalents (FTEs) needed to staff the program were provided by the County.
78 Due to various appeals and procedural complexities, the process of removing immigrants from the country often takes a few months to a year. In addition, the cost of holding illegal immigrants is $90 per day.
79 Of course, reentering the country may also be relatively easy for those deported. PWCPD officers have noted cases of persons returning after deportation.
arguably represents a notable gap in ICE’s coordination with PWC agencies. In August 2010, the Chairman of PWC’s Board of County Supervisors, Cory Stewart, requested that ICE provide the County with aggregate figures on the outcomes of PWC’s immigration cases. That request was still pending as of this writing.

That issue aside, senior officials that we interviewed from ICE’s OI are supportive of PWCPD’s efforts through the 287(g) program. With only 120 agents available for all missions in Virginia and Washington, D.C., OI officials feel that PWCPD’s CAU is a valuable complement to their workforce and that coordination between the two agencies has been good. OI officials estimate that CAU sends them 7 to 12 cases per month. OI and CAU also use a task force approach in which they plan strategy case by case, based on potential penalties available at the federal and local level. OI officials estimate that they still receive the same number of violent immigrant cases that they received before the CAU began operating, but that CAU’s assistance makes the handling of these cases much less cumbersome.

Initially, OI agents also handled the removal of immigrants from ADC due to a personnel shortage in DRO. This put substantial strain on OI, which is not as well equipped and staffed to handle these duties. This led in turn to delays in the removal of illegal immigrants from ADC and contributed to overcrowding in the facility, as discussed above. This issue was corrected by 2008, and DRO has since taken responsibility for transporting illegal immigrants from ADC or allowing their release within 48 hours of identification.

Nevertheless, cooperating with PWC’s immigration policy has been very demanding for ICE. In the summer of 2008, ICE proposed cutting back on the types of cases referred from PWC, but it agreed to continue the current arrangement after further consultation with PWC officials. However, ICE indicated that it would not enter into any additional 287(g) agreements in the region for at least the remainder of fiscal year 2008, and that other current and future 287(g) agreements would not be as broad as that established with PWC because ICE does not have the capacity to operate in that manner with many jurisdictions.

Indeed, concerns about the net-widening effects of the 287(g) program and other efforts nationally80 led the Obama administration to implement changes in the program in October 2009. In that month, ICE established a new standardized memorandum of agreement (MOA) to govern all current and future 287(g) agreements, including those with PWCPD and ADC. The new MOA emphasizes a focus on immigrants who have committed serious crimes, pose a threat to public safety, and/or have been previously ordered removed from the country (Rodriguez et al., 2010). Under the new agreement, ICE will take custody of immigrants under the following circumstances: 1) the subject has been convicted of a State, local, or Federal crime and has completed any term of incarceration for that offense(s); 2) the subject has prior criminal convictions and his/her immigration detention is required by statute; or 3) ICE decides on a case-by-case basis to assume custody of a subject not meeting the previous criteria (ICE Memorandum of Agreement with PWCPD, effective October 16, 2009).

The new MOA also seeks to solidify ICE’s control over the priorities of 287(g) personnel conducting field operations. In addition to making administrative changes regarding issues such as background checks and certification of officers, the new agreement establishes priority levels for different types of criminal offenders and requires ICE approval for operations focusing on immigration

---

80 The number of persons removed from the country by ICE nearly doubled from 185,431 in FY 2006 to 356,739 in FY 2008 (see http://www.ice.gov/pi/reports/annual_report).
enforcement and immigration arrests involving no state or local charges. Top priority, or “level 1”, targets for arrest and detention include immigrants who have been convicted of or arrested for “major drug offenses and/or violent offenses such as murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, and kidnapping.” Level 2 subjects are those convicted of or arrested for “minor drug offenses and/or mainly property offenses such as burglary, larceny, fraud, and money laundering.” Finally, level 3 offenses include those who have been convicted of or arrested for “other” offenses.

However, PWCPD and ADC officials indicate that this new MOA has had relatively little impact on their operations, which have always been oriented towards the enforcement priorities stated above. Irrespective of whether an identified illegal alien is incarcerated or not, and regardless of ICE policies regarding prosecution, PWCPD notifies ICE of the alien’s presence. As shown in Section 4, moreover, detainers issued by ADC remained steady from 2009 through the first half of 2010.81

81 Figure 4-4 of Section 4 shows that there was a temporary decline in releases to ICE (and in the ratio of releases to detainers issued) around the time of the new agreement. It is unclear whether this was due in some manner to the new MOA; either way, releases rebounded to their prior levels by early 2010.
7 Changes in the County’s Hispanic Population and the Number of Illegals

7.1 Changes in the County’s Hispanic Population

Did Prince William County’s illegal immigrant population decrease after the Police Department implemented General Orders 45 and 45.01? This is a challenging question to answer because no official statistical source actually counts illegal immigrants as an identifiable category of persons. As has already been noted, during the same period that the policy was being debated and initiated (July 2007 through March 2008), housing and other construction, which had been booming in Prince William County, decreased dramatically. In January 2001, the Bureau of Labor Statistics documented 9919 employed construction workers in PWC. In June 2006, the number of construction employees had grown to 15,786. By January 2008, the figure had fallen almost 4,000 to 11,909.82 This section of the report looks at the available evidence to assess changes in the County’s Hispanic population, to determine whether or not the County’s illegal population decreased in number, and to consider if these changes are attributable to the County’s immigration policy or to other causes.

Because the policy’s public debate and implementation occurred at the same time that the housing market and its associated construction collapsed, it is challenging to disentangle the effects of the policy from the effects of the economy. However, the economic downturn was not limited to Prince William County, but affected all parts of the metropolitan region. It is therefore instructive to compare Prince William’s rates of growth and change with those of the rest of the region. We know that, generally speaking, the population of Northern Virginia grew rapidly between 2000 and 2006 and then slowed down noticeably.83 This six year period saw a 16% increase from 1,847,594 to 2,142,968, but from 2006 to 2007 Northern Virginia’s population grew only 0.8% to 2,160,891 and increased by 1.2% between 2007 and 2008. Prince William County recorded similar broad trends, except that its population growth rate in the first half of the decade (27%) was twice that of Northern Virginia as whole. After 2006, this growth rate declined significantly to 0.8% up to 2007 and 1.2% between 2007 and 2008, when the total population stood at 346,734. However, this growth likely resulted from natural increase, since population estimate data from the University of Virginia’s Weldon Cooper Center show that up to 2006, in-migration accounted for two-thirds of the county’s population growth (69 percent), but this ratio changed sharply after 2006, with natural increase accounting for 85 percent of population growth up to 2008.

Meanwhile, the county’s Hispanic population saw explosive growth between 2000 and 2006, charting a 150% increase. Paralleling the County’s overall population trend, this growth rate fell precipitously to only 1.2 percent between 2006 and 2007 and 0.7% between 2007 and 2008.84 Thus, Prince William County changed from being a place where (after 2000) Hispanic growth greatly outpaced that of Northern Virginia or the metropolitan region as a whole, to a place where Hispanic growth was slower than elsewhere in the region. Essentially, the Hispanic population of the County leveled off after 2006, while it continued rapid growth in the metro area, as can be seen clearly in Figure 7-1. From 2006 to 2009, the Hispanic population of Prince William County grew by only 3.6 percent, while in the same period the Hispanic population of the metro area as a whole grew by 18.8 percent;

83 This calculation includes the following counties: Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, Stafford, and Spotsylvania.
84 These data derive from the American Community Survey.
taken together, the metro DC jurisdictions outside of Prince William County ("metro minus PWC") had a Hispanic growth rate of 23.0 percent, nearly six times faster than the growth rate of Hispanics in the County. As Figure 7-1 makes clear, from 2000 to 2006 Prince William County alone accounted for all of the growth in the metropolitan area’s Hispanic population; after 2006 it accounted for a very small share of that growth.

**Figure 7-1. Hispanic Population Trend: PWC vs. DC metro area and balance of metro**

![Hispanic Population Trend: PWC vs. DC Metro](image)

7.2 **Indicators of decrease in the number of illegal immigrants: data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey**

Through an analysis of the Public Use Micro Sample [PUMS] data sets that are made available to analysts by the U.S. Census Bureau, based on the results of the American Community Survey [ACS], we are able to learn more details about changes in the composition of Prince William County’s Hispanic population.85 Using the PUMS data, available from 2005 to 2008, we can look within the Hispanic population to see some of its changing characteristics. In this data source, we cannot separate Prince William County from the independent cities of Manassas and Manassas Park, so these are treated as one geographic unit that we label “PWC + cities.” The ACS and the decennial

---

85 The American Community Survey is a continuous, nationwide data collection by the U.S. Census Bureau that replaces the “long form” formerly used in the decennial census to collect socio-demographic data from a sample of U.S. households. By continuously sampling households across the country, the ACS gathers sufficient data to make estimates for social, demographic, and housing characteristics annually for large localities (like PWC) and on a three-year or five-year basis for smaller localities and census geographic units. The PUMS data sets make available to researchers actual individual records from the ACS, de-identified so that no person can be identified in the data set. Large localities and metropolitan areas can be identified in the dataset PUMS data are made publicly available through the iPUMS website, a service of the Minnesota Population Center. For more information, see www.ipums.org.
census do not ask or record whether a person is in the United States legally, but they do count those who are U.S. citizens and those who are not. Of course, non-citizens include both those in the United States legally and those who are illegal. These data show that, compared to the rest of the Washington, D.C. metro area, the percentage of Hispanics who are non-citizens increased noticeably until 2006 and started declining thereafter. This decline accelerated after 2007, whereas the proportion of non-citizen Hispanics in the Washington, D.C. metro area, which had been growing up until 2007, declined more gradually thereafter (Figure 7-2).

**Figure 7-2. Percent of Hispanics who are Non-Citizens, in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area and in Prince William County-Manassas- Manassas Park City**

A similar pattern is seen when we look at the percentage of Hispanics who have low English proficiency. These include those who speak no English and those who are reported to speak English “poorly.” As seen in Figure 7-3, the percentage of Hispanics in PWC + cities who speak little or no English increased to about one third in 2006, but then dropped to only a little over one fifth in the two years following the implementation of the policy.
A similar result is observed in the data for “linguistic isolation” among Hispanic residents of the County (plus the two cities). The census bureau defines a person as linguistically isolated if the person does not speak English and also resides in a household in which no person speaks English ‘very well’ or speaks only English. Figure 7-4 shows the changes in the percentage of Hispanics who are linguistically isolated in Prince William County (plus the two cities) from 2005 to 2008, again based on our analysis of ACS PUMS data. The percentage of Hispanics who were linguistically isolated rose to a high of 42 percent in 2006, then fell to about 28 percent by 2008, two years after the policy was implemented. In the rest of the metro area, the percent of linguistically isolated Hispanics stayed steady at near 30% from 2005 to 2007, then dropped in 2008. As the graph illustrates, the rise and fall of Hispanics lacking English and lacking access to a good English speaker in their household changed by larger proportions in PWC than in the rest of the metro area. In 2006 the Hispanic population of Prince William was considerably less acculturated than the Hispanic population of the rest of the metropolitan area; by 2008 the population had a level of acculturation (as measured by language proficiency) that was not much different from the rest of the metro area.
The change in language pattern seen in the ACS data is borne out by data from an entirely different source: the records of the Prince William Police Department’s use of the “language line.” The language line is a contractual service through which a police officer can call for immediate help, via telephone, from a language interpreter when, during the course of duty, the officer must converse with someone who does not speak English. Figure 7-5 is based on the monthly billings from the language service, which records and bills for each time the service is used by an officer. As can be seen in the figure, the vast majority of the calls for interpretation services were for Spanish translation. These calls display peaks and valleys that reflect the normal seasonal trends in police calls (with more activity in warmer months). The language-line calls have been trending downwards, with a sharp decline notable in the latter half of 2007, after the introduction of the immigration resolution. The language-line calls went down further in 2008, and still further in 2009.

The change in activity on the language line is quite substantial. There were more than 500 calls in every month from January 2006 through October 2007, but no month from November 2008 through April 2010 had more than 400 calls. Data for 2010 are not complete, but may show a small upward trend from the 2009 low. That increase may be due to the fact that the Department discontinued an alternative translation source, the “Spanish hireback” program, provided by bi-lingual PWCPD officers who were paid overtime to provide translation help on call. That service was available from May of 2006 to April 2010. The termination of the internally provided service was driven primarily by budgetary considerations, but one officer who had been part of the translation detail told us that their level of activity had declined markedly from the busy days of 2007.

The decline in the number of Hispanics with low English proficiency is strong evidence that the number of illegal immigrants declined in the County. We do not mean to imply, of course, that no

---

86 The exceptionally low data points in September and October 2008 are reporting anomalies due to the fact that the Police Department changed vendors for the language service.
illegals can speak English nor that one must speak English well to be a legal resident. It is nonetheless clear that Hispanics with low English proficiency are less acculturated, that newer Hispanic immigrants are less likely to know English well, and that illegals are less likely to know English well. We can be confident that the percentage of illegals is higher among Hispanics of low English proficiency than it is among the more acculturated English-speaking Hispanics.

Figure 7-5. Usage of Telephonic Language Interpretation Service by PWC Police and Communications

As indicated previously, the rate of growth in the Hispanic population slowed drastically after 2006, declining to only 1.2 percent between 2006 and 2007, where it had stood at 150 percent between 2000 and 2006. The 2007-2008 rate was even lower, coming in at only 0.7 percent. Detailed analysis of American Community Survey data for 2007 and 2008 underlines this slowdown, showing that the net increase in the Hispanic population was only 510 individuals; but this net increase obscures the fact that a substitution effect occurred among Hispanics. In this one year period, the percentage of Latin American-born individuals in the county declined by 10.4 percent, while that of American-born Hispanics increased by 17.4 percent (primarily Cubans, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans).

Other ACS data show that the portion of the Hispanic population experiencing decline was concentrated among young Hispanic males (Figure 7-6). Immigrants in this age group left Prince William County in disproportionate numbers, compared to the Washington metropolitan area as a whole. For example, in the Washington metro area Hispanic males in the 20-24 age cohort saw a population decline of 3 percent between 2006 and 2008, and 25-29 year olds declined by 5 percent. During the same period, Prince William County registered declines of 26 percent and 20 percent among Hispanic males in the same age categories. This represents a decline of about 2,000 males in these two age groups in Prince William over two years. A reasonable conclusion is that many of these were
illegal immigrants – likely Central Americans, considering the high proportion of these immigrants living in the Northern Virginia area. Of course, the downturn in available construction jobs played a role in causing young Hispanic men to leave the area, since many had come to the area to work in construction. However, the construction downturn was not by any means confined to the Prince William area. The sharp difference in the rate of decrease in these population groups in the County compared to the rest of the area suggests that this was an effect of the County’s immigration enforcement policy.

**Figure 7-6. Decline in Male Hispanic Population, Aged 16-30: Washington, D.C. Metro Area and Prince William County-Manassas City-Manassas Park City**

The impact of these changes in the Hispanic community can be seen by looking at one of the demographer’s favorite analysis tools, the ‘population pyramid’ that graphs male and female populations by age group in opposite bars on a single graph. For comparison, consider the population pyramid for the non-Hispanic population of Prince William County in 2006, as seen in figure Figure 7-7. It shows a fairly typical suburban population, with high proportions of baby-boomers (ages 35 to 65), fairly low proportions of elderly residents, and substantial numbers of children in all age groups except 18-19-year-olds, many of whom are away at college or in the military. Notably, the percentages in each age group are roughly equal for men and for women in each age category.

Figure 7-8 shows the population pyramid for County Hispanic residents in the same year, 2006. This shows a far younger population, as is typical for new immigrant groups, with higher percentages in the younger adult cohorts and in the younger ages of the children. But also notable is the strong imbalance in the gender ratios, with young Hispanic men far outnumbering young Hispanic women. A high ‘sex ratio’ is typical of areas of rapid in-migration generally, as the first in-migrants are very often young men seeking work who are either unattached or migrate without bringing their families with them from their place of origin. The 2006 population pyramid shows clearly that there were large numbers of unattached young males among the Hispanics in the County; it is safe to surmise that this group, many of whom came to the County to work in the construction jobs that were still plentiful in 2006, included a large proportion of illegal immigrants.

The population pyramid for County Hispanics from 2009, after the immigration policy had been proposed, debated, and implemented for over a year, shows a noticeably different pattern (see
Figure 7-9. Three changes are evident compared to the 2006 population distribution: (1) the number of younger adults (below age 35) has gone down for both men and women, (2) the excess of men over women in the young-adult ages has diminished, and (3) the age distribution of children has shifted to the younger ages. Given that there was no decline in the overall Hispanic population in these years, all of these suggest that the Hispanic population has become more typically suburban, including more married (or at least partnered) adults, and more parents of young children.

This fits with the anecdotal reports we have heard from various sources of overcrowded houses populated by many young Hispanic males in 2006 becoming vacant after the introduction of the policy, and then later being occupied by young families, often Hispanic. It can be inferred, then, that the introduction of the policy stabilized the Hispanic community of Prince William County not only by changing the rate of overall growth but by significantly altering the structure of the Hispanic population.

**Figure 7-7. Population Pyramid for non-Hispanics, PWC 2006**
Figure 7-8. Population Pyramid for Hispanics, PWC 2006.

Figure 7-9. Population Pyramid for Hispanics, PWC 2009.
7.3 Informant reports about population changes

The trends suggested in these quantitative data are fully supported by the information we gathered in our interviews with social service providers, Police Department personnel, County staff, business people, pastors and other community leaders. Evidence taken from these informant interviews suggests a rise in the general level of anxiety among Hispanics and a decline in the illegal immigrant population after 2006. These data do not tell us the magnitude of the movement, but are broadly consistent with demographic data showing a sharp decline in the county’s population growth rate after that year. Illustrating the rising anxiety levels, one minister recounted how some parishioners had started taking identification cards with them everywhere, in case they were stopped and asked to account for their presence. Fear such as this caused some illegal immigrants to leave the county. As an employee in a large PWC institution said,

> At the grocery stores you don’t see as many of them—at the grocery store—I mean I’ll stop here before I head home, and I’ll see it.

A Health Department employee reported,

> The number of WIC clients decreased. A fair amount went to Fairfax ... We noticed the decrease because they were asking for their information to be transferred. Initially staff reported that people were requesting the records and moving because they were scared.

7.3.1 Other indicators of population change

Trying to disentangle the size of the policy’s effects from those of the economic recession with respect to outmigration is critical in assessing the policy. It is also very challenging because many social service agencies, whose information might be useful in estimating the loss of illegal immigrants in the county, do not gather immigration status data. In many cases, there are good reasons for this. Illegal immigrants fear deportation and avoid government agencies and other places where they might be asked their status. Depending on the agencies' missions, it may be more important to ensure that people use agency services than to ensure that those people who use those services are in the country legally. For example, public health departments aim to ensure the health of entire populations and a process which deters people from using public health services, such as requesting information about immigration status, may endanger the agency's mission. However, since the bulk of the County’s illegal immigrant population are Hispanics, it is useful to look at what other data sources can tell us about changes in the Hispanic population of the County and the adjacent small cities.
Data from a number of other sources support the conclusion of a decline in the illegal immigrant population since 2006. For example, demographic impacts of the policy are apparent in data on school enrollments. Looking first at Hispanic students as a percentage of school enrollments, as seen in Figure 7-10, we see that the Hispanic percentage rose rapidly in PWC from 2002 through the 2006-07 school year, but then leveled off in the next three years. In contrast, the Hispanic percentage of pupils in Fairfax County rose more sharply from 2007 to 2010 than it had in prior years, and Arlington County, which had experienced several years of declining Hispanic percentages in its schools, suddenly saw an increase after 2007-08, when the PWC policy was implemented. This is one of several demographic data sets that suggest (along with our informant interviews) that some Hispanics relocated from PWC to Fairfax and to Arlington in immediate response to the policy’s enactment.

The trend in the county’s ESOL enrollments also indicate a reduction in the county’s Hispanic—and possibly illegal immigrant—population. Again, we can assume that children who do not know English are more likely to be newcomers to the United States and more likely to be illegally present than those who do know English. As one county official noted, after the County passed its resolutions, her children’s play groups became less Hispanic. Another resident said that his church’s ESOL classes for adults was “decimated” and is now more diverse, with Asians along with Hispanics. In the 8 years before fall 2008, ESOL enrollments in Prince William County had been steadily rising by an average of 1,450 students a year, an almost twelve-fold increase. In fall 2008, the number of ESOL students dropped by 247 (see Figure 7-11).87 Although the press and some of our informants reported a fairly large drop in the ESOL student population between Fall 2007 and April 2008 (over 700 students), a look at the county’s data over time indicates that the population of ESOL students typically drops between September and June every year by about the same number. The more reliable figure is 247 because it measures the change between one fall (2007) and the next (2008) and does not reflect academic year fluctuations in student enrollments due to things such as dropping

---

out of school or, perhaps, moving back to the country of origin. This drop not only suggests that some illegal immigrants left the county, it also indicates that some dynamic—the policy or the economy—deterred immigrants from moving into the county. As is seen in Figure 7-11, the numbers of ESOL students enrolled in Fairfax County, Alexandria, and Arlington all registered increases from 2007 to 2008. ESOL enrollments in PWC rose again in 2009, while enrollments in Fairfax County leveled off; this suggests a return to the County—or a fresh influx—of less-acculturated Hispanics with children. Despite this latest upturn, the number of ESOL students would have been far higher in Prince William if the rate of growth seen in the years from 2000 to 2007 had continued in 2008 and 2009.

Another indicator of change in the Hispanic population in the County and the nearby cities is found in Virginia Health Department statistics on births to Hispanic women. As can be seen in Figure 7-12, births to Hispanic mothers rose rapidly in Prince William from 2000 to 2006, then fell sharply from 2006 (2,384 births) to 2008 (1,776 births), a 25 percent decrease over two years. In contrast, births to Hispanic mothers continued to rise in Fairfax County from 2007 to 2008 and, to a lesser extent, in Loudoun County. Figure 7-13 shows that similar downturns occurred in the adjacent cities of Manassas and Manassas Park, while other small northern Virginia cities (Fairfax City and Fall Church) experienced no decline in Hispanic births during this period. Once again, the pattern of change in Prince William and the adjacent cities is distinctly different from that seen in nearby jurisdictions.

---

88 Births are recorded according to the residence address of the mother, not the location of the hospital where the birth took place.
Figure 7-12. Births to Hispanic women, PWC and other counties

Total Hispanic Births 2000-2008 for Selected Counties

- Arlington County
- Fairfax County
- Loudoun County
- Prince William County

Figure 7-13. Births to Hispanic women, small cities

Total Hispanic Births for Selected Jurisdictions 2006-2008

- Fairfax city
- Falls Church city
- Manassas city
- Manassas Park city
7.4 By how much did the number of illegal immigrants decline?

Given the available information, the decline in the illegal immigrant population appears to have been substantial, although it may have been experienced as even more so by people living in areas where immigrants are highly concentrated. If several houses on a block are overcrowded, that can have a tangible impact on people’s daily lives when it comes to parking a car; if these houses are vacated, the local effect will be substantial.

How many illegal immigrants were there in Prince William County to begin with? Unfortunately, there is no way to know with any great certainty. Census data indicate that in 2006—a year before the first resolution—the Hispanic population stood at 68,418, many of whom were immigrants. Our analysis of the 2006 ACS PUMS dataset indicates that 50.3 percent of the Hispanic residents were non-citizens in 2006—about 34,000 Hispanic non-citizens. Some national studies indicate that undocumented immigrants constitute at least 30 percent of the immigrant population. That percentage could vary widely across states and localities, and there is no such percentage estimate available that can be confidently applied to the Prince William case. It is plausible that this percentage might be higher in Prince William County because of the size and nature of the recent population inflows to the County. If we assume (conservatively) that anywhere from 25% to 33% of Hispanic non-citizens in Prince William were present illegally, we would bracket the number of Hispanic illegals (of all ages) at somewhere between 8,600 and 17,200 people; small additional numbers of illegal residents of other ethnic backgrounds were also present. We can thus say with considerable certainty that the number of illegals in the County, including all nationalities, probably numbered in the tens of thousands; the great majority of these were Hispanic.

Although we cannot determine the number of people who left the county as opposed to changes in the numbers who might have moved in, some estimates of the overall change in the illegal population are possible. The ACS tells us that there were 69,751 Hispanics of all ages in the County in 2008. Our analysis of ACS PUMS data shows that in 2008 only 37.7% of these were non-citizens, meaning that there were 26,300 Hispanic non-citizens in the County, down from about 34,000 in 2006. That is, non-citizens dropped by 7,700 among Hispanics (plus some small number of non-Hispanics). This represents a 22 percent drop in the number of Hispanic non-citizens in two years. If we assume, conservatively, that legal and illegal non-citizens were affected equally by the introduction of the policy, and also assume (as above) that one-quarter to one-third of Hispanic non-citizens are in the U.S. illegally, then the net decrease in the number of illegals would be between 25 and 33 percent of that figure: that is, the decrease in illegals would be, by the most conservative estimates, between 1,925 and 2,557 persons. On the more plausible assumption that the policy would have caused many illegal non-citizens to leave (or not move in) while having far less effect on legal non-citizen residents, or if one assumes that the percentage of illegals among non-citizens was higher in Prince William than the national average for Hispanics, then the net decrease in illegals could plausibly be anywhere between 3,000 and 6,000 persons. All our data sources taken together indicate that in the two years after the policy was introduced, the number of illegal immigrants in the

---


91 The Pew Report also estimated that 78 percent of all undocumented immigrants are Hispanic, Ibid.
County was substantially reduced, probably by no more than 5,000 persons overall, but certainly by more than a thousand.

According to an informant in a county hospital:

> We can chart some of the movement out of the county—it has not been as overwhelming as I thought it would be for our clients—one of our workers was collecting some data for us, I don’t know how accurate it is, but I wanted to see in terms of our Spanish speaking population if there were fluctuations, and really it’s about the same. There are spikes, but those tend to be seasonal spikes—there are particular months—October is a big month for us and July and August are down.

Whatever the size of the population loss, it is clear that the trajectory of rapid growth in the immigrant population was substantially altered around the time of the policy’s adoption due to a convergence of circumstances already described.

### 7.4.1 Why Did People Leave?

It is unclear how much of this substantial decrease was attributable to the immigration enforcement actions of the police (that is, people getting arrested and turned over to ICE), fear of the policy as initially enacted, the highly publicized anti-immigration sentiment voiced in the controversy, or the economic downturn. All four of these factors probably played a role. As the policy was being debated, a serious downturn in the housing market began and foreclosures in Prince William County rose precipitously. As it was being implemented, the entire economy entered a recession. In Prince William County, for example, the number of construction jobs in the county, which had risen by 41 percent between 2000 and 2005 decreased significantly by 2007. Seventy-five percent of the earlier gains in construction jobs were lost. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, about 4,000 construction jobs were lost in PWC due to the mortgage and foreclosure crisis between June 2006 and June 2008;92 some of the workers in these jobs were immigrant day laborers who may have left the county primarily for economic reasons.

Many interviewees acknowledged the impossibility of disentangling fear, arrests and the severe economic downturn as causative factors in possible Hispanic outmigration. The highly politicized nature of the policy means that people have tended to interpret the outmigration according to their policy position. People in support of the policy have tended to report that the policy had a large impact on the change:

> Yes, our street at this time last year—my block—probably has about 30 homes on it, and this time last year it probably had 10 homes that were overcrowded, my wife didn’t feel it was safe to take the kids out for a walk in the evening—there were concerns about being in the street, being out in front of the house—issues of drunken drivers—folks who had their cars smashed into by drunken drivers—only the back yard could be considered safe.

Greg Letiecq, Help Save Manassas

People opposed to the policy have two interpretations. Members of Mexicans Without Borders, an advocacy group, suggested that the county had become a hostile environment for all immigrants, leading to an exodus of legal immigrants, as well as those in the country illegally:

> I know in my neighborhood the number of Latino families that have left—it’s a lot—my street alone, probably about 8 families who have left—we know how many people have left—when we call meet-

---

92 Ibid., Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages for the Private Construction Industry, Prince William County, Virginia.
ings—we used to have several hundred people come to those meetings, and a large number of them have gone, the ones that have remained cannot sell their homes—people don’t want to live in a county that is as unwelcome as PWC, if I could leave, I would. There are business owners that are re-locating. If you believe that people should be treated as human beings and not be judged by the color of their skin [then you don’t want to stay in this county].

Nancy Lyall,
Mexicans Without Borders

Here we have one of the very few points upon which some opponents of the policy agree with its advocates. Others, however, deny that the policy had an effect:

More than half my 10,000 parishioners are Hispanic...The press has made it sound like because of the resolution hordes of people have left PWC in reaction to this racist resolution. That is wholly inaccurate. Certainly there has been a number who have left the county but not because of any perceived racism or they are afraid of being stopped by the police. The vast majority of illegal immigrants have left simply for economic reasons. Because this whole thing happened at the same time as the huge downturn in the housing market, and it’s a vicious circle for Hispanics because I would say that the majority of Hispanic men in my parish work in construction. Construction is down so they lose their jobs...Now, interestingly, our numbers here of Hispanics in the parish have grown over this time. The number of registrations is up and the number of people coming to Mass is the same or higher. So we have not experienced any significant decrease in the number of Hispanics. That being said, whenever I go out to Hispanic restaurants—which I do frequently—or Hispanic businesses which I know in the area, I notice that the numbers have fallen. I think a lot of that has more to do with economics than with persecution.

Rev. Donald J. Planty, Jr.,
Holy Family Catholic Church

Father Planty’s observations fit well with our analysis above of the recent figures from the ACS, showing that the characteristics of the County’s Hispanic population changed but that its size did not diminish.

Although trying to determine how many people left because of the policy and how many left because of the economy is impossible, the evidence is relatively strong that both played a role in people’s decisions to leave. First, if estimates from the Government Accountability Office about the proportion of people that ICE deported from 287(g) programs hold for Prince William County, about 65% of the people who were turned over to ICE as a result of both the Jail’s and the Police Department’s 287(g) programs probably did not return to the county because they were detained or deported. By the middle of 2010, the number of people turned over to ICE since the initiation of the policy was 2,499. Second, as we saw in Section 5.2.3, many police officers think that both illegal and legal immigrants left as a result of the policy. Also, information from interviews suggests that the policy played a role in people leaving the county. Carlos Castro, a businessman who maintains extensive contacts with the county’s Hispanic population because of his many businesses catering to that community, has argued that the period leading up to passage of the resolution in 2007 frightened some Hispanics into leaving the county. Among his businesses, Mr. Castro runs a travel agency, and he stated that some Hispanics had bought one way tickets back to their homelands. Others migrated to different counties. He also reported:

I don’t have anything scientific way of proving it, but Manassas is a ghost town when it comes to Latinos. Also, in day-to-day contacts with my business, I knew of people who were moving out who were citizens. I told them not to move but they said that some of their relatives would not come to visit them in PWC.
Mr. Castro emphasized the need for care in interpreting the issue of possible outmigration by county Hispanics. He argued that though, initially, some had been frightened into leaving, once the community realized that the resolutions did not mean mass deportations the fear subsided and the outflow ceased. Again, our analysis of the ACS and other data sources suggests that a process of replacement was in effect in which departing Hispanics who were illegal were replaced by other Hispanics who were more acculturated and thus more likely to be legally present in the U.S.

In a similar vein, officials reported that in March 2008, when General Order 45 went into effect, there was a very large drop in attendance at the most popular day labor site in the county. Before that month 30 to 60 men congregated at the site; afterwards the number of men was in the single digits. If the drop was due only to the economy, one would not expect to see such a sudden large drop. And later, even as the economy worsened significantly, attendance at the site began to rise; police officials attributed the rise to greater comfort with the policy. By early fall it had risen to about 75 percent of what it had been prior to the policy by fall 2008, according to police commanders. It is possible, of course, that none of the people who waited for work at the site in fall 2008 were those who had waited at the site prior to March 2008. But it is probably more likely that the group consisted of both old and new day laborers.

A patrol officer who works in a neighborhood where most of the residents are Hispanic reported:

Initially we saw less [sic] illegal immigrants. I have a buddy [who] is a Fairfax officer, and he works [in an area of the county] where they have a majority [of] immigrants, too. And he said that once our policy took effect their population like tripled, and he said it is now starting to come down. They are coming back [to Prince William County] for work.

Finally, the policy might have contributed to the high numbers of foreclosures. Foreclosure rates in PWC were much higher than those in surrounding counties. One County employee explained the issue this way:

There’s a lot of vacant property. This is my own personal opinion: that the environment in the county in the summer of 07 to the fall of 07 was increasingly inhospitable to the immigrant population; and as the rhetoric and the news media and the coverage—it was all ramped up everyday; people were talking about it. You read the newspapers, there was a constant back and forth in the Op Ed pages of people’s opinions; so it was very much at the forefront of what people were talking about for a period of time at the same time that the effects of the mortgage crisis became known; and those first resets were happening, where people’s loans were resetting from 3 and 4 percent to 8, 9, 10, 12, 15 percent. The construction industry had gone flat…My own personal opinion was that the environment was so inhospitable and the money issue was so severe that instead of trying to stay in their homes, and figure out ways that they could keep this home, they pretty much tossed in the towel. Because we found that a lot of places, addresses we had been called to previously, in previous years, for overcrowding, and cars: These were the ones we were now being called out on for tall grass, vacant structures that needed boarding, trash left behind: that sort of thing. So it seemed to me that people just didn’t want to stay and fight for this house. Either they couldn’t financially or, if they could, they chose not to; that they would rather move on somewhere else because the atmosphere in the community was really not conducive to good relations if you’re an immigrant.

### 7.5 Summary

Despite the challenges associated with attributing changes in the community to the policy vs. the economy, the data suggest that Prince William County’s immigration enforcement policy resulted in some important changes in the community. While Prince William County accounted for most of
the growth in the metropolitan area’s Hispanic population from 2000 to 2006, after the policy’s introduction nearly all Hispanic growth in the metro area occurred outside of Prince William. We know that the number of non-citizens in the County decreased substantially, and we have firm data from U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, police records, and other sources, that indicate a decrease in the number of illegal immigrants, as indicated by a variety of proxy measures that all point in the same direction. We estimate that the number of illegal immigrants in the County decreased by an amount between 2,000 and 6,000 persons from 2006 to 2008, depending on one’s assumptions about the percentage of departing non-citizens who are illegal. Although we cannot determine how many left because of the policy or because of the economy, and both contributed to the declines in the immigrant population, the fact remains that the declines seen in Prince William’s non-citizen and non-acculturated Hispanics were not nearly matched by changes elsewhere in the metropolitan area. The County’s immigration policy must have played a role here, whether by itself or in conjunction with the severe economic changes that hit the County (and the rest of the metro area) at the same time. We also note that fewer immigrants and fewer Hispanics are moving to Prince William County, although this again is probably attributable to the same range of causes. The overall result was a sudden leveling off of what had been rampant Hispanic population growth in the County, a decrease of several thousand in the number of illegal immigrants, and a restructuring of the Hispanic population as unattached young adults (mostly male) left and were replaced by Hispanic married couples, somewhat older adults, and families with small children, all more likely to be English speakers.
8 The Impacts of the Immigration Policy on Crime and Disorder in Prince William County

This section of our report provides an assessment of the impact that immigration enforcement has had on crime in PWC. PWC’s Board of County Supervisors placed substantial emphasis on public safety in promoting the County’s immigration policy, and some have credited the policy with recent reductions in crime in PWC. Accordingly, we examine this issue drawing upon interviews and surveys of PWCPD personnel, a review of PWCPD data on arrests of illegal immigrants, our own analyses of multi-year trends in offense reports and calls for service to PWCPD, a comparison of crime trends in PWC to those in other jurisdictions in the DC area, and changes in victimization as measured in surveys of County residents.

To summarize, we find that the policy has not affected most types of crime in PWC, in large part because illegal immigrants account for a small to modest share of offenders for most types of crime. However, there was a substantial drop in serious assaults following the announcement of the policy and the initiation of immigration checks at ADC in July 2007. We attribute this primarily to the publicity surrounding the adoption of the policy in its original form, but we caution that some of this drop may have been due to a reduction in reporting of assaults by illegal immigrants. That being said, the policy in its current form appears to be a reasonable way of targeting illegal immigrants who are serious offenders—a policy goal on which there is broad agreement.

In the subsections below, we provide some brief background on crime in PWC and review some of the factors that make it challenging to gauge the impact of the immigration policy on crime in PWC. Next, we review PWCPD statistics on recent trends in officially reported crimes and arrests in PWC—including post-policy arrests of illegal immigrants—and offer some interpretations of those data. We then present original analyses of:

- Trends in calls for service to PWCPD for various types of crime and disorder from 2000 through 2009;
- Trends in serious crimes reported to PWCPD from 2003 through 2009;
- Trends in serious crimes in PWC in comparison to those of other DC area jurisdictions from 2005 through 2008;
- Changes from 2008 to 2010 in victimization and crime reporting among PWC residents as measured in community surveys; and
- Changes from 2008 to 2009 in officers’ perceptions regarding crimes related to crime and immigration in the County.

Finally, we provide a summary of our key conclusions.

8.1 Background on Crime in PWC

We begin with a few general observations about crime in PWC. In 2007, the last full calendar year before the implementation of PWC’s immigration policy, PWCPD reported 620 Part I violent crimes (including 10 murders) and 7,125 Part I property crimes (PWCPD, 2009).93 The County’s rates of violent and property crimes, 163 per 100,000 and 1,822 per 100,000 respectively, were

---

93 These counts are based on Part I “index” crimes as defined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Part I violent crimes consist of murder and non-negligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Part I property crimes consist of burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft.
substantially lower than the national averages and the averages for other suburban areas (see PWCPD, 2009 and www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2007).

In general, the crime rate in PWC has been falling since the mid-1990s (see PWCPD, 2009; 2010). Trends from 2000 through 2009 are displayed in Figure 8-1. Crime generally declined through the decade until 2007. Since then, the crime rate has hovered between 19.5 and 20.1 (PWCPD, 2010: 8). In sum, PWC is not a high-crime county, nor has its overall crime rate increased in any straightforward way with the growth of its immigrant population.

Figure 8-1. Crime Rate in PWC, 2000-2009 (crimes per thousand).

Behind this general trend, however, there has been substantially variability in recent trends for different types of offenses. Violent crimes, primarily robbery and aggravated assaults, climbed from 2004 to 2006 but fell sharply during 2007 and 2008. The decrease in violence was driven by reductions in aggravated assault and robbery, but particularly by trends in the former. Aggravated assaults dropped from 310 in 2007 to 197 in 2008, a 36% decline, before rebounding somewhat to 216 in 2009 (see Figure 8-2 and PWCPD, 2010: 11). Robberies dropped 9% in 2008, from 272 in 2007 to 248 in 2008, and increased slightly to 255 in 2009. Not surprisingly, these trends have stirred debate over whether the immigration policy contributed to the county’s drop in violent crime.

Note that PWCPD’s published counts of aggravated assaults in 2008 and 2009 differ from those published in the FBI’s annual Uniform Crime Reports publication, Crime in the United States. The FBI’s report shows 262 aggravated assaults reported by PWCPD in 2008 and 339 in 2009. According to records personnel in PWCPD, there was a change in the data reported by PWCPD to the UCR reporting program for 2008 and 2009. Consequently, the 2008 and 2009 FBI figures for PWCPD are not compatible with those reported for earlier years. Therefore, we use the aggravated assault counts reported by PWCPD in its annual reports (which were not affected by this change) in our assessment of trends in crime in PWC.
The decreases in robbery and aggravated assault began in 2007, following two years of increases in 2005 and 2006 (PWCPD, 2009: 10). In 2007, robbery declined 22.5% while aggravated assault declined 18%. Both crimes continued to decline in 2008, though the decline accelerated for aggravated assault and slowed for robbery. Within PWCPD, the decline in robbery has been attributed in part to the Department’s robbery reduction initiative launched in 2006, well before the introduction of the immigration enforcement policy (PWCPD, 2009: 10; also see PWCPD presentation to the PWC Board of County Supervisors, September 9, 2008). The reason or reasons for the decline in aggravated assault seem less clear.

**Figure 8-2. Aggravated Assaults in PWC, 2005-2009.**

In contrast, serious property crimes (burglary, larceny, and auto theft) have been relatively stable since the implementation of the immigration policy, rising 5.3% from 2007 to 2008 and declining 2.7% in 2009. Less serious offenses have shown mixed trends. Arrests for simple assault, for example, increased 2.5% in 2007 (PWCPD, 2008: 9), remained steady in 2008, and then rose 9% in 2009 (PWCPD, 2008: 9; 2009: 13; 2010: 14). As discussed below, the two crime types in which illegal immigrants are most heavily involved are public drunkenness and driving under the influence (DUI). Arrests for the former declined 9.3% in 2008 and 16.9% in 2009 (though unpublished figures provided by PWCPD show that much of the latter decrease was due to a PWCPD policy

---

95 In 2008, PWCPD received a national award for its robbery suppression initiative from the National Association of Counties.

96 Note that PWCPD presents both offense reports and arrests for Part I crimes. For most other crimes, including vice, public order, and drug/alcohol offenses, PWCPD reports only arrests (this is customary among police agencies). For these latter crimes, we must infer changes in occurrence based on changes in arrests.
change that reduced arrests for drunkenness at a local concert venue). In contrast, arrests for DUI increased 13.6% in 2008 and declined by only 2.8% in 2009 (PWCPD, 2009: 13; 2010: 17).

8.2 Considerations in Assessing the Policy’s Impact on Crime and Disorder

In the sections below, we present more extensive analyses of the immigration policy’s impacts on several categories of crime in PWC using a number of data sources and approaches. Before presenting those analyses, we begin by reviewing four key issues that complicate any assessment of illegal immigration and crime in PWC.

1) Data are not available to specifically assess changes over time in crimes committed by illegal immigrants.

The most critical limitation in assessing the effects of the immigration policy on crime is that there are no historical data on crimes committed by illegal immigrants in PWC. How much crime in PWC was committed by illegal immigrants prior to the immigration policy is unknown. PWCPD did not begin collecting data on arrests of illegal immigrants until it implemented General Order 45 in March of 2008. Those data, discussed below, suggest that illegal immigrants account for a small to modest share of offenders for most types of crime, but they do not indicate the involvement of illegal immigrants in crime prior to the policy.97, 98

All of the pre-post trends discussed below, measured from officially-reported incidents and calls for police service, are based on crimes committed by all offenders in PWC. Consequently, it is possible that any recent changes in crime (for better or worse) have been due to changes in offending by native residents, legal immigrants, illegal immigrants, or some combination thereof.

2) It is conceivable that the policy has had multiple and opposing effects on actual and reported crime.

Reducing crime by illegal immigrants: To begin with, the policy may have reduced crime by illegal immigrants through some combination of incapacitation and deterrence. From March 2008 through June 2010, PWCPD arrested nearly 2,400 illegal immigrants. Further, ADC issued roughly 2,800 detainers and released 2,500 illegal immigrants to ICE from July 2007 through June 2010 (see Section 4). Although the dispositions of these persons are not known, many of them are likely to have been incapacitated permanently or at least temporarily through deportation (which is perhaps best viewed as incapacitation in this context) or detention in local, state, or federal facilities. Illegal immigrants who have been arrested in PWC or even just questioned about their immigration status—PWCPD had about 3,000 recorded contacts with suspected illegal immigrants through June 2010—may also be less likely to commit new offenses in PWC, or even return to PWC, for fear of future punishment and deportation. (This is akin to what criminologists call specific deterrence.)

97 Data on crimes committed by illegal immigrants at the national level are also very limited. As an approximation, estimates from the late 1990s and early 2000s suggest that 4% to 7% of persons held in U.S. jails and prisons are non-citizens (Bureau of Justice Statistics at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/crimoff.html; Hagan and Palloni, 1998).

98 Other studies on immigration and crime generally suggest that immigrants are actually less involved in criminality than the native population (e.g., Butcher and Piehl, 1998a; Hagan and Palloni, 1998; Sampson, 2008), though these studies do not typically distinguish between legal and illegal immigrants. Similarly, a number of local and national studies have concluded that growth in the immigrant population does not increase crime and may in fact reduce it (e.g., Akins et al., 2009; Butcher and Piehl, 1998b; Hagan and Palloni, 1998; Lee et al., 2001; Martinez, Jr. et al., 2010; Sampson, 2008).
In addition, the policy may have had more general deterrent effects in the community. That is, some immigrant offenders and would-be immigrant offenders may have left PWC voluntarily, while others that remained may have become more reluctant to commit crimes, whether serious or minor, due to the policy. Illegal immigrants who are serious offenders presumably face greater risks of being proactively targeted (by CAU) or of having their status discovered if detained or arrested for any kind of offense. It seems quite plausible, furthermore, that effects from the policy have spread beyond the serious offenders on whom PWCPD and ICE have focused, fueled by a more general fear among illegal immigrants that encounters with police will lead to detection and deportation, and perhaps by a perception that police are acting aggressively to target illegal immigrants. Although we have no specific figures on changes in the illegal immigrant population in PWC, our analysis of changes in the County’s demographics strongly suggest a substantial decline in the population of illegal immigrants, as discussed above in Section VII. Moreover, between two-thirds and three-fourths of police officers that participated in our PWCPD surveys in the fall of 2008 and 2009 agreed or strongly agreed that the policy has resulted in the departure of illegal immigrants from PWC (see Section 5.2.3 above). Those who remain, whether or not they have a prior record of criminal offending or deportation, may be more cautious about engaging in any behavior that makes contact with police more likely. For all of these reasons, one might expect to see a general drop in both serious and minor offenses by illegal immigrants.

**Reducing victimization of illegal immigrants:** A related possibility is that the policy may have prompted the departure from PWC of illegal immigrants who were at high risk for victimization. In this sense, the policy may have reduced the population of both potential offenders and potential victims. Indeed, among PWCPD personnel with whom we spoke, there is a general perception that, relative to native residents, immigrants are less likely to commit serious predatory offenses and, if anything, more likely to be victimized in such crimes. As an illustration, Hispanics overall (regardless of immigration status) accounted for 48% of robbery victims in 2007 but only 21% of robbery suspects (unpublished data provided by PWCPD).

**Reducing crime reporting by illegal immigrants:** At the same time, it is also possible that the policy has discouraged reporting of crimes by victims and witnesses who are illegal immigrants, or even by persons who are connected in some way to illegal immigrants. This could lead to reductions in reported crimes that are illusory. Indeed, PWCPD has cautioned that the recent drop in reported violent crimes could be due in part to a decline in reporting of crime by Hispanics (PWCPD, 2009: 5). As discussed elsewhere in this report (section 8.5), Hispanics are victimized at a somewhat higher rate than are other segments of the population in PWC, and their level of satisfaction with police dropped in the immediate wake of the policy (section 10.1). Despite the efforts of PWCPD to assure the community that they do not check the immigration status of crime victims and witnesses, reporting by illegal immigrants is still a concern; in our surveys of PWCPD officers in 2008

---

99 In the context of judging the recent drop in aggravated assault, it is perhaps worth noting that criminologists generally consider reporting and recording of aggravated assaults to be less reliable than those of homicide and robbery (e.g., Blumstein, 2000). We cannot say whether this applies to reporting of aggravated assaults in PWC.

100 As an illustration, PWCPD documented several cases during 2007 and 2008 in which robbery suspects admitted to committing unreported robberies of Hispanic victims. In some cases, suspects stated that they intentionally sought Hispanic victims because they thought Hispanics would be less likely to report the crimes (PWCPD memorandum from PWCPD’s Assistant Chief for Criminal Investigations to Chief Deane, September 2, 2008).

101 Similarly, a study of a public controversy regarding local police and immigration enforcement in Costa Mesa, California suggests that Hispanic residents became less likely to report crime in the wake of the policy and that their perceptions of police became more negative (Vidales et al., 2009).
and 2009, 30%-40% of officers reported that problems in getting illegal immigrants to report crime occur often or regularly (see Section 5.2.3 and Appendix C).102

**Increasing crime or crime reporting:** On the other hand, it is also conceivable that the policy has led to increases in some crimes and greater reporting of others. Victimization of illegal immigrants, for example, might now be higher if potential predators believe that victims and witnesses who are illegal immigrants are less likely to report offenses to the police. Such an increase, moreover, might not be apparent from police data for the reasons discussed above. As discussed in Section 5, PWCPD officers also believe that the policy has prompted greater reports of trespassing, loitering, and other disorder problems by some in the community who see the policy as a tool for removing or at least intimidating suspected illegal immigrants (though this problem seemed more prevalent in the early days of the policy). Hence, a change in reporting behavior could have led to an increase in reports for some categories of minor crime.

Finally, we should also consider that the policy has arguably diverted PWCPD resources from other crime-fighting efforts. One example is the transfer of detectives to the CAU. In addition, the policy has probably caused officers to arrest many illegal immigrants for minor violations (such as traffic offenses) that would normally result in the issuance of a summons. Officers must also spend additional time filling out field interview cards and running immigration checks on arrestees. Although line officers interviewed for the project did not feel heavily burdened by the policy, PWCPD commanders have expressed concern about the policy’s cumulative impacts on resources across the agency. Moreover, planning and implementation of the policy have also required considerable time and effort from PWCPD’s command staff, which has diverted some of their attention from other matters, possibly including crime fighting.

**3) The likely timing of the policy’s effects is not clear.**

Arguably, there are at least two key intervention dates that should be considered in assessing the policy’s effects. One is March 2008, at which time PWCPD implemented immigration checks under General Order 45. It is also possible, however, that perceptual and behavioral effects associated with the policy began in July 2007 with the initial, exploratory action on the policy by the PWC Board of County Supervisors, the simultaneous start of 287(g) checks for arrestees admitted to ADC, and the beginning of the widely covered and acrimonious public debate over the proposed policy. In the analyses of crimes reported and calls for service presented below, we test for impacts of the policy using both dates.103

**4) Factors other than the immigration policy may have impacted recent crime trends in PWC.**

One key factor in this regard has been the county’s economy. The construction boom of the late 1990s and early 2000s was a primary attractor for the recent influx of immigrants (both legal and illegal) to PWC (e.g., see Singer et al., 2009). Conversely, the recent downturn in PWC’s economy, particularly in the housing sector, is believed to have driven many immigrants away. And while the economic downturn has likely prompted the departure of many illegal immigrants—thus reducing their contribution to crime in PWC—it may have also increased the propensity to commit crime among native residents, legal immigrants, and illegal immigrants who have remained. Either way,

---

102 Our surveys do not show whether this problem has increased since the policy.

103 We assume that any effects caused by PWCPD’s immigration enforcement efforts began after March 1, 2008 and that they were not substantially enhanced or diminished by either the suspension of General Order 45 at the end of April 2008 or the implementation of General Order 45.01 in July 2008.
distinguishing the unique effects of the immigration policy from those of the local economy can be a difficult task.

Other PWCPD initiatives may have also affected recent crime trends in PWC. The beginning of the downward trend in violent crime in 2007, for example, coincided with PWCPD’s robbery suppression initiative launched in 2006 (also see Section 5). This focus on violent predatory offenders may have contributed to the declines in both robbery and aggravated assault. Also, PWCPD has been operating a gang task force since 2004 (PWCPD presentation to the PWC Board of County Supervisors, September 9, 2008). Considering that gang members are involved in a high share of serious assaults (e.g., homicides and gun assaults) in many jurisdictions around the country, it is possible that PWCPD’s anti-gang efforts have also helped to reduce aggravated assaults in PWC. To our knowledge, this issue has not been studied explicitly.

In the analyses presented below, we attempt to control for these factors by accounting for trends in crime that predated the policy. We also test for changes in crime that coincided closely with the policy’s announcement and implementation.

8.3 Arrests of Illegal Immigrants

To begin our assessment of the policy’s impact on crime in PWC, it is instructive to examine statistics on arrests of illegal immigrants, which PWCPD began to collect in March 2008. These data can show us how much crime is currently attributable to illegal immigrants and whether there have been any recent trends in their offending. As noted earlier, PWCPD arrested nearly 2,400 illegal immigrants from March 2008 through June 2010. During 2009, the first full year during which the policy was in effect, PWCPD made 1,150 of these arrests. Below, we focus largely on the 2009 figures, which are the most recent available. As shown in Table 8-1, 121 arrests of illegal immigrants in 2009 were for Part I offenses, and these arrests accounted for 6% of all Part I arrests that year. The share of Part I arrestees who were illegal immigrants ranged from 0% for murder to 9% for aggravated assault and was no more than 4% for most crime types. And with the exception of larceny, the number of arrests involving illegal immigrants was quite low for each of these offenses—typically no more than eight.

Illegal immigrants also account for low numbers and percentages of arrests for many other common offenses (see Table 8-2). For UCR Part II classification offenses (e.g., drug and weapons offenses, simple assault, disorderly conduct, forgery, etc.), illegal immigrants accounted for 6% of arrestees overall in 2009. For most such offenses, arrests of illegal immigrants numbered less than 10 and/or accounted for less than 5% of arrests (see PWCPD, 2010: 17).

Arrests of illegal immigrants are most substantial, both in number and as a percentage of arrests, for public drunkenness (269 arrests accounting for 20% of all public drunkenness arrests in 2009), DUI (286 arrests representing 13% of all DUI arrests in 2009), and driving without a license (205 arrests constituting 10% of all arrests for driving without a license in 2009). These offenses are highlighted in Table 8-2.
Table 8-1. Arrests of Illegal Immigrants in PWC for Uniform Crime Reports Part I Crimes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part I Crimes</th>
<th>Total Persons</th>
<th>Illegal Immigrants</th>
<th>Illegal immigrants as % of Arrestees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murder</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated Assault</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larceny</td>
<td>1,467</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicle Theft</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,053</strong></td>
<td><strong>121</strong></td>
<td><strong>6%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from PWCPD’s 2009 Crime Statistics (PWCPD, 2010: 16)

Table 8-2. Arrests of Illegal Immigrants in PWC for Other Selected Crimes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Crimes</th>
<th>Total Persons</th>
<th>Illegal Immigrants</th>
<th>% Illegal Immigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Part II Arrests</td>
<td>12,254</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Drunkenness</td>
<td>1,365</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUI</td>
<td>2,138</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Operators License</td>
<td>2,085</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from PWCPD’s 2009 Crime Statistics (PWCPD, 2010: 17)

Overall, the arrest data show that illegal immigrants currently contribute rather modestly to most forms of crime in PWC. These figures may not provide a reliable guide as to the share of crimes committed by illegal immigrants before the policy, and they cannot be used to directly assess changes in crime caused by the policy. They imply nonetheless that the policy has had only small to modest effects on most types of crime in PWC. They are also consistent with the views of criminal justice practitioners interviewed for the project, who felt that illegal immigrants, on the whole, have not contributed heavily (or disproportionately) to serious crime in PWC. 104

104 Other studies on immigration and crime generally suggest that immigrants are actually less involved in criminality than the native population (e.g., Butcher and Piel, 1998a; Hagan and Palloni, 1998; Sampson, 2008), though these studies do not typically distinguish between legal and illegal immigrants. Similarly, a number of local and national studies have concluded that growth in the immigrant population does not increase crime and may in fact reduce it (e.g., Akins et al., 2009; Butcher and Piel, 1998b; Hagan and Palloni, 1998; Lee et al., 2001; Martinez, Jr. et al., 2010; Sampson, 2008). A more subtle point is that the PWC data provide no clear indication as to whether illegal immigrants are overrepresented or underrepresented among arrestees in PWC compared to their representation among the population of PWC. Although we have no firm basis for judging this, available estimates suggest that roughly one-third of immigrants in Virginia and the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area are in the country illegally (Fortuny et al., 2007). If this statistic can be generalized to PWC, it implies that illegal immigrants account for approximately 7% to 8% of PWC’s total population (immigrants in general represent 22% of PWC’s population). This suggests in turn that illegal immigrants are slightly underrepresented among offenders in most crime categories but that they are overrepresented in a few categories like public drunkenness and driving without a license. On the other hand, it is also quite likely that illegal immigrants have recently declined as a share of PWC’s immigrant population, in which case these generalizations are less tenable. A related point is that we do not have data from other
Another pattern that is apparent from PWCPD reports is that arrests of illegal immigrants have been increasing since the policy was implemented. Table 8-3 presents monthly arrests of illegal immigrants in total and for selected crimes during the final ten months of 2008 and all of 2009. Overall, monthly arrests of illegal immigrants rose from 63.7 in 2008 to 95.8 in 2009 (see bottom row). Table 8-3 also shows total arrests for July through December of 2008, the first six months during which the current version of the policy was in operation. Arrests of illegal immigrants were also lower during this portion of the year in comparison to 2009. Likewise, monthly arrests of illegal immigrants increased from 2008 to 2009 for Part I crimes, public drunkenness, and DUI (statistics for these crimes were only available for March through December of 2008). This trend could reflect the return of some illegal immigrants to PWC as fear of the policy has ebbed, an improvement in the ability of PWCPD and ADC to identify illegal immigrants over time, or some combination of these factors.

Table 8-3. Trends in Arrests of Illegal Immigrants, 2008-2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime Category</th>
<th>2008 Arrests per Month</th>
<th>2009 Arrests per Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part I crimes</td>
<td>6.3 (Mar. – Dec.)</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public drunkenness</td>
<td>15.4 (Mar. – Dec.)</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUI</td>
<td>11.1 (Mar. – Dec.)</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total arrests</td>
<td>63.7 (Mar. – Dec.)</td>
<td>72.6 (Jul. – Dec.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This pattern has notable implications. Most importantly, it suggests that any deterrent effect that the policy may have had on crime most likely occurred prior to the policy’s implementation by PWCPD. In other words, the announcement of the policy by the Board of County Supervisors in July 2007 and the attendant public controversy, coupled perhaps with the implementation of immigration checks by ADC, may have had a greater impact on crime (and/or crime reporting) by illegal immigrants than did PWCPD’s implementation of the policy in March 2008. Enforcement of the policy since March 2008 has not produced a gradual abatement of crime by illegal immigrants, as measured by the trends in arrests. We investigate the policy’s impacts on crime, and the timing of those changes, in more depth in the next section.

The arrest statistics also raise questions as to whether the policy can be credited with recent reductions in public drunkenness in PWC, despite the heavier involvement of illegal immigrants in this form of disorder. After increasing 12% in 2007, arrests for public drunkenness declined roughly 13% in 2008 and 10% in 2009 (these statistics exclude arrests at a major concert venue in PWC and thus differ in magnitude but not direction from published statistics that were cited earlier). Yet, as shown above, arrests of illegal immigrants for public drunkenness ran contrary to this overall trend from 2008 to 2009. Below, we investigate the policy’s impact on longer term trends in public drunkenness and other forms of disorderly conduct in PWC.

105 ADC statistics on detainers issued for illegal immigrants show a steady trend during this period (see Section 4) in contrast to the increase shown in arrest statistics. However, neither data source shows any evidence of a decline in crime by illegal immigrants since the time when the PWCPD policy was put into operation.
8.4 Time Series Analysis of Crime Reports and Calls for Police Service

8.4.1 Data and Methods

In this section, we utilize interrupted time series methods to examine changes over seven to ten years in several categories of crime and calls for service as recorded in PWCPD’s records management system. These analyses provide a more rigorous assessment of the policy’s impacts that takes into account longer term trends and patterns in crime in PWC.

First, we investigate pre- and post-policy trends in PWCPD incident reports for UCR Part I violent and property offenses from January 2003 through December 2009. We examine trends in total violent crime (i.e., murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault) and total property crime (i.e., burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft). In addition, we present analyses focusing on robbery and aggravated assault.

We complement the analysis of offense reports with an assessment of trends in calls for service (CFS) for several types of crime and disorder in PWC using data from PWCPD’s computer-aided dispatch system for the period of January 2000 through December 2009. CFS data provide an alternative source for studying trends and patterns in crime and disorder, and they have a number of strengths relative to other data sources (Sherman et al., 1993; Warner and Pierce, 1993). CFS represent an unscreened look at events that the public feel require police response, resulting in many more criminal events than would be captured in official records (i.e., reported crimes and arrests) and victimization surveys. Other forms of official data rely on interpretation of the event by official agents, and a decision to file a report. CFS are similar to other official data in that they reflect criminal behavior coupled with citizen willingness to report that behavior, but they eliminate police discretion (i.e., official reaction to criminal behavior). Further, CFS data capture instances in which victims or complainants desire a police response to a situation but do not wish to file a report—a consideration that could be particularly salient to cases involving illegal immigrants. In addition, CFS data do not require the victim to make the call, as bystanders may call the police about crimes in progress. CFS data are particularly valuable for studying trends in minor offenses (e.g., disorderly conduct) because official incident and arrest counts for these offenses can be heavily influenced by officer discretion and changes in agency policy.

Our analysis focuses on calls for five types of incidents defined below. (The specific call designations included in each category are listed in Appendix D.)

- Personal crimes: crimes involving violence (fights and other assaults, rape, robbery, etc.), discharging of firearms, or bomb threats.
- Property crimes: burglary, vandalism, theft (including auto theft), and fraud (in the form of bad checks).
- Disorder crimes: disorderly conduct, public drunkenness, loud parties, trespassing, and the like.
- Drug-related crimes: drug-related complaints and calls about overdoses.
- Driving under the influence (DUI)

A more detailed discussion of the incident and CFS data and our procedures for processing them is available in Appendix E.
For each of these call categories, we examine changes in the weekly average of incidents or calls for each crime category following both key policy dates discussed above—July 1, 2007 and March 1, 2008. We thus present one set of models in which the former date is treated as the key intervention date and another set of models using the latter date as the intervention point. We determined the direction, magnitude, and statistical likelihood of these changes using statistical models that controlled for seasonal patterns and trends that predated the immigration policy (e.g., increases in offenses or CFS linked to population growth over the last several years). Using these models, we assessed whether post-policy changes were greater than would be expected to have occurred by chance, given the normal variability of crime over time in PWC. We judge observed pre-post changes to be statistically meaningful—i.e., “statistically significant” in scientific terminology—if their likelihood of occurring due to natural variation was less than 5%.

Most of the analyses presented below are based on data for the entire County (or, more specifically, those parts of the County policed by PWCPD). For certain offenses, we also examine trends in heavily Hispanic areas of PWC where we expect that illegal immigrants were most prevalent.

### 8.4.2 Results

We describe our methodology and results in more detail in Appendix E. Here, we summarize our key findings. Pre-post changes in the examined crime and disorder categories appear in Table 8-3. Changes that appear with one or more asterisks beside them were statistically significant.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense / CFS Category</th>
<th>Models using July 1, 2007 as intervention date</th>
<th>Models using March 1, 2008 as intervention date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reports for all Part I violent crimes</td>
<td>-10.16% *</td>
<td>-10.76% *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports for aggravated assault</td>
<td>-27.23% ***</td>
<td>-27.50% ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports for all Part I property crimes</td>
<td>1.25%</td>
<td>-0.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFS for personal crimes</td>
<td>-8.37% ***</td>
<td>-8.74% ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFS for property crimes (2000-2009)</td>
<td>-1.02% ***</td>
<td>-4.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFS for disorder crimes</td>
<td>-4.94%</td>
<td>-5.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFS for drug-related crimes</td>
<td>2.89%</td>
<td>2.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFS for DUI</td>
<td>-1.02%</td>
<td>7.87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p<.001, ** p<.01, * p<.05

Overall, the immigration policy did not affect most categories of crime and CFS. Post-policy changes in property crimes (as measured by both CFS and reports for Part I property offenses), disorder crimes, drug offenses, and DUI were modest, variable in direction, and not statistically significant.
In contrast, we found indications of a statistically significant reduction in violence based on both reports for Part I violence and CFS for personal crimes. Part I violent crimes declined by 10% to 11% after the policy, while CFS for personal crimes declined 8% to 9%. The reductions in violence were nearly the same whether using the July 1, 2007 or March 1, 2008 intervention date. This suggests that the impact of the policy predated PWCPD’s implementation of the policy in March 2008. This can also be seen in the weekly trends for these offenses as illustrated in Figure 8-3 and Figure 8-4. Indeed, reports for Part I violent crimes rebounded after March 2008, though this was not enough to completely offset the decline that occurred during late 2007 and early 2008.

Figure 8-3. Part I Violent Crimes in PWC, 2003-2009 (Weekly).

The reduction in the violent crimes index is largely driven by the reduction in aggravated assaults.
We probed the violence trends in greater depth by using the offense reports to examine three specific categories of violence: aggravated assault (Part I), robbery (Part I), and simple assault. Models for these offenses indicate that the drop in violence was driven by trends in aggravated assault, which are shown in Table 8-3 and Figure 8-5. Beginning shortly after July 2007, aggravated assaults dropped by 27% (this is the model-based estimate of change) and remained at a lower level through the end of 2009. The timing of the drop strongly suggests that it was caused by the announcement of the policy (and perhaps the initiation of immigration checks at ADC), though we again caution that this may reflect a drop in reporting as well as a drop in assaults.

As discussed in Appendix E, results for robbery varied considerably based on model specification, with some models suggesting a post-policy decline and others suggesting an increase (for this reason, we did not present the robbery results in Table 8-3). On balance, however, the evidence suggests the policy did not significantly affect trends in robbery. Results for simple assault were also mixed and varied depending on the intervention date. The model for the July 2007 intervention point showed a statistically significant increase in simple assaults, but this change appeared to be temporary, as the March 2008 model showed a statistically non-significant decline.

107 We also examined the timing of the drop in aggravated assault by running a series of models testing for changes six months prior to July 2007, three months prior to July 2007, three months after July 2007, and six months after July 2007. These tests provided further confirmation that the impact occurred between July and December of 2007. The model coefficients associated with these dates were as follows: 1.4 for January 2007, -0.6 for April 2007, -2.2 for July 2007, -2.7 for October 2007, and -2.3 for January 2008.
8.4.2.1 Geographical and Demographic Patterns in the Trends for Aggravated Assault

As a further test of the violence trends, we examined the effects of the policy on violence within areas of PWC having high concentrations of Hispanic residents. Specifically, we analyzed crimes reported in PWCPD patrol beats corresponding to Woodbridge, Dumfries, and areas in and around Manassas (see Singer et al., 2009: 13). These are also the areas where most illegal immigrants are arrested, as shown in Section 4, and they account for two-thirds of the violence in the County. Accordingly, we hypothesized that the policy’s effects would be most apparent in these areas.

We aggregated offense reports across the police beats in these areas and estimated models testing the policy’s impact on total violence and aggravated assaults. The model for total violence confirmed that violent crime declined significantly in these areas after July 2007 (see Appendix E). Further, the decline in violence in these areas accounted for roughly half of the countywide reduction. Estimation of models for aggravated assault was more difficult due to the small number of assaults per week in these areas. Nonetheless, the models suggest—at least tentatively—that 70% of the County’s decline in aggravated assault occurred in these areas.

Using data reported by PWCPD to the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) program, we also examined changes from 2005 through 2009 in the demographics of offenders and victims involved in aggravated assault. The percentage of arrestees who were Hispanic varied between 21% and 28% over these years and did not follow a consistent pattern. Trends in victims were more difficult to assess due to missing data. However, the percentage of victims who were of Hispanic or unknown ethnicity fell from roughly half during 2005-2007 to roughly one-third in 2008 and 2009 (this was due to a reduction in victims with an unknown ethnicity). Also, among those victims whose

108 Note again that PWCPD does not have responsibility for policing Manassas City or the nearby location of Manassas Park City.
109 These results are based on a custom run of UCR data on file by the Virginia State Police, which was ordered and paid for by our project. Our thanks to Dr. Norma Westerberg for facilitating and helping to specify this data purchase.
ethnicity was identified, the ratio of non-Hispanic to Hispanic victims increased steadily over the years, from 1.87 in 2005 to 2.88 in 2009 (an increase of over 50%). This suggests that victimization of Hispanics fell relative to that of non-Hispanics during the post-policy years, at least with respect to reported assaults. We caution that trends for Hispanic victims and offenders may not be an accurate proxy for trends among illegal immigrants. Nonetheless, these figures imply that an important component of the drop in aggravated assault was likely a decline in actual and/or reported victimization among Hispanics that may have been attributable in large part to illegal immigrants.

8.4.2.2 Summary of the Trend Analysis

Our analysis of trends in crime suggests that the policy did not reduce most forms of crime and disorder in PWC. However, aggravated assaults declined considerably after the announcement of the policy in its initial form. We again caution that the decline in aggravated assaults could represent changes in reporting as well as changes in offending and victimization. Indeed, anticipating that reporting might decline, the Department’s outreach effort urged people to continue to contact the police if they saw or were a victim of a crime. In the next section, we examine data relevant to this issue from the University of Virginia’s annual survey of PWC residents.

8.5 Crime Victimization and Reporting by County Residents

Our study also has data revealing post-policy trends in victimization and crime reporting among PWC residents.Our study team added new questions to the 2008, 2009, and 2010 versions of the Prince William County Citizen Survey asking residents if they (or anyone in their household) had been the victim of any kind of crime, and (for those who said yes) whether or not they reported the crime to the police. The results of the interviews, conducted in the summer months of each year, are seen in Figure 8-6 and Figure 8-7.

For these years, the level of victimization of Hispanic residents (13%-15%) was somewhat higher than among other residents (11%-12%), though this difference was not statistically significant (Figure 8-6). Moreover, victimization rates have been stable for both Hispanics and non-Hispanics over the last three years. This reinforces our other findings that the policy has not affected most forms of crime and that those impacts the policy has caused occurred largely before the policy’s implementation in 2008.

Among those who were victims of a crime that occurred in PWC, the rates of reporting were nearly identical for Hispanics and non-Hispanics, and were statistically indistinguishable within the survey’s margin of error (Figure 8-7). (Overall, the data suggest a slight increase over the last few years in reporting among both Hispanics and non-Hispanics, but this was not a statistically significant trend.) While the sample size of crime victims is small (due to the low overall crime rate in the county), these data do not suggest that there is a problem of under-reporting of crime by Hispanics in PWC. However, since we do not have comparable data from any earlier surveys, we cannot say with certainty whether there have been pre to post-policy changes in either the rate of victimization or crime reporting in the Hispanic community. Moreover, we cannot directly address trends in crime victimization or crime reporting among illegal immigrants with these data.

A caveat to this conclusion is that the aggravated assaults reported by PWCPD to the UCR program in 2008 and 2009 included some varieties of assault that had not been reported in prior years (see footnote 96). Whether this affected trends in the ethnic composition of offenders or victims could not be determined from the available data.

These statistics are based on victimization that occurred within PWC.
8.6 PWC Crime Trends in Comparison to Other Jurisdictions

Next, we compare recent crime trends in PWC to those in several other localities in the Washington, DC area. These comparisons show whether crime in PWC has improved or worsened relative to other DC area jurisdictions and provides further insight into how crime in PWC has been affected.
by both the immigration policy and larger social forces in the Washington, DC region. We focus primarily on DC area cities and counties of 100,000 or more persons, which we believe provide the most appropriate comparison jurisdictions for PWC. However, we also compare PWCPD’s reported crime figures to those in Manassas City, which is the largest independent city within PWC (with a population of approximately 35,000) and an area where Hispanics constitute a large share of the population (e.g., see Singer et al., 2009: 13). A map of the Washington, DC area, taken from Singer et al. (2009), is shown in Figure 8-8.

Unless otherwise noted, we contrast PWCPD’s reported annual crime figures from 2005 through 2009 with those of the comparison jurisdictions as reported in the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports (see http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm#cius). A limitation to the analysis is that we do not have the data necessary to conduct a detailed examination of whether trends in the comparison jurisdictions changed specifically following July 2007 or March 2008.

We focus on total violent crime, aggravated assault, and total property crime. For each jurisdiction and crime category, we first computed the jurisdiction’s average rate of crime per 100,000 persons for the years 2005 and 2006 (i.e., the pre-policy period). We then computed the average rate for the years 2008 and 2009 (i.e., the post-policy period) and examined the change in the averages from 2005-2006 to 2008-2009. These changes are expressed as percentage changes in Table 8-6.

8.6.1 Trends in PWC and Manassas City

As shown at the top of Table 8-5, both PWCPD and Manassas City reported reductions in total violence, aggravated assault, and total property crime during this period. In both cases, the reductions were greatest for violent crime and aggravated assault. However, the reductions were much larger for the County overall, as reflected in PWCPD’s numbers, than for Manassas City. The average rates of total violent crime and aggravated assault declined 31.9% and 46.7%, respectively, for most of the County during this period. These crimes also declined in Manassas City, which provides further confirmation that crime was falling in areas with large Hispanic populations. However, the reductions in violence in Manassas City were in the more modest range of 7% to 10%.

112 If other DC area localities have experienced reductions in violence similar to those in PWC (or even greater), this would suggest that factors other than the immigration policy affected violence in PWC. Conversely, a finding that violence has declined more substantially in PWC than elsewhere in the DC area would provide additional evidence that the drop in violence in PWC was due at least in part to the policy. Similarly, a finding that other types of crime have increased throughout the DC area while remaining steady in PWC could also suggest that the immigration policy has helped prevent increases in other forms of crime in PWC.

113 See our discussion of PWCPD’s UCR figures in footnote 96.
### Table 8-5. Changes in Crime Rates in PWC and Other Washington, DC Area Jurisdictions (Percentage Changes in Two-Year Averages, 2005-2006 to 2008-2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction(s)</th>
<th>% Chg Total Violence</th>
<th>% Chg Aggravated Assault</th>
<th>% Chg Total Property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prince William County</td>
<td>-31.9%</td>
<td>-46.7%</td>
<td>-8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manassas City</td>
<td>-9.7%</td>
<td>-7.2%</td>
<td>-3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Virginia Jurisdictions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria City</td>
<td>-37.6%</td>
<td>-43.5%</td>
<td>-4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arlington County</td>
<td>-26.1%</td>
<td>-27.8%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfax County</td>
<td>-14.7%</td>
<td>-2.1%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loudoun County</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
<td>-8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spotsylvania County</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>-1.6%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>(34.6)</td>
<td>(46.3)</td>
<td>(14.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland Jurisdictions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince George’s County</td>
<td>-19.9%</td>
<td>-18.1%</td>
<td>-15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery County</td>
<td>-4.8%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick County</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles County</td>
<td>-3.0%</td>
<td>-1.5%</td>
<td>-9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>-6.3%</td>
<td>-3.5%</td>
<td>-4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>(9.6)</td>
<td>(10.1)</td>
<td>(9.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 8.6.2 PWC in Comparison to Other Northern Virginia Localities

Next, we examine other jurisdictions of 100,000 or more persons in northern Virginia. These include Alexandria City and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Spotsylvania.114 (Stafford County, Virginia was excluded from this analysis because it did not report complete data to the Uniform Crime Reports for all years under study.115) Like PWC, most of these counties have a substantial immigrant, particularly Hispanic, population. Foreign-born persons account for 21% to

114 The data for Virginia counties are based on reports from the primary law enforcement agency in each county. Some of these counties have independent cities and townships that report their own data to the UCR, though the primary county agencies are responsible for the vast majority of the counties’ populations and reported crime. Data for Fairfax County did not appear in the UCR for 2005; therefore, the 2005-2006 figures for Fairfax are based on 2006 alone. The 2009 population of these jurisdictions ranged from 121,000 in Spotsylvania County to over 1 million in Fairfax County. PWC’s population was estimated at 386,394 in 2009.

115 Crime figures from the Stafford County Sheriff’s Office do not appear in the 2005 and 2006 editions of the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports. Stafford County figures for these years do appear in Crime in Virginia, a report published annually by the Virginia State Police that serves as the basis for UCR reporting in Virginia. Based on their omission from the FBI reports, however, we infer that Stafford’s data were incomplete or otherwise problematic for those years.
27% of the population in Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudoun (Singer et al., 2009: 8). (In PWC, they account for 22%.) The exception is Spotsylvania County, where only 6% of the population is foreign-born (see the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Fact Finder at http://factfinder.census.gov). In most of these counties, the immigrant population has been relatively stable in recent years. However, Loudoun County, which neighbors PWC, experienced a nearly 200% increase in its foreign-born population between 2000 and 2006, which exceeded the 144% growth in foreign-born persons in PWC (Singer et al., 2009: 7).

A number of these jurisdictions were also conducting some level of immigration enforcement as of late 2009, according to our survey of DC area jurisdictions (see Section 4 and Appendix B). The Loudoun County Sheriff’s Office entered into a 287(g) task force agreement with ICE in June of 2008 (Rodriquez et al., 2010: 25) and began running immigration checks on arrestees and other lawfully detained persons believed to be in the country illegally in July 2008.116 Correctional authorities in Loudoun had begun immigration checks approximately one year earlier. Police in Alexandria and Arlington also reported in our survey that their local jails had been running immigration checks since August 2006 and January 2008, respectively. Further, Fairfax became part of the Secure Communities program in the spring of 2009, approximately one year before the program was implemented throughout the state (see discussion in Section 4).117 However, immigration enforcement activities in these jurisdictions did not receive the same publicity—and associated notoriety—as did those in PWC.

Crime trends were highly variable among the Virginia counties. Total violence, for example, declined by an average of 1.6% across these localities, but the changes for individual jurisdictions ranged from a decline of 37.6% in Alexandria to an increase of 37.5% in Spotsylvania County. Indeed, the typical variation around the average rate of change (i.e., the standard deviation in statistical terminology) was plus or minus 34.6 percentage points.

Compared to these jurisdictions, PWC had one of the largest reductions, if not the largest, in each category. With respect to violence, PWC had the largest drop in aggravated assault and the second largest drop in total violence. However, changes in PWC were not outside the range of variability for crime trends in northern Virginia.118 Alexandria and Arlington experienced reductions in total violence (37.6% and 26.1%, respectively) that were greater than or comparable to those in PWC. Alexandria had a decline in aggravated assaults (43.5%) very similar to that of PWC, and Arlington also had a substantial drop (27.8%).

On the other hand, PWC did particularly well relative to the other outer suburban counties of Loudoun and Spotsylvania. The comparison of PWC to neighboring Loudoun County may be particularly telling, given their proximity and the similarity of both their recent immigration trends and their immigration enforcement policies. The sharp divergence of crime trends in PWC and Loudoun would seem to imply that the drop in certain crimes in PWC was due largely to the substantial publicity surrounding PWC’s immigration policy and/or to factors besides immigration enforcement (e.g., economic trends and other police initiatives).

116 Sheriff’s deputies in Loudoun also document contacts with suspected illegal immigrants as do PWCPD officers.
117 The Fairfax County Police Department and the Spotsylvania Sheriff’s Office did not complete our survey.
118 Expressing PWC’s change as a standardized score (i.e., a statistical z score) relative to the average rate of change and standard deviation for Virginia jurisdictions yields a statistically non-significant value.
8.6.3 PWC in Comparison to Maryland Localities

The Maryland counties of Prince George’s, Montgomery, Frederick, and Charles appear in the bottom rows of Table 8-5 (page 98). Among the Maryland counties, Montgomery and Prince George’s have foreign-born populations representing, respectively, 29% and 19% of their total populations (Singer et al., 2009: 8). Although its immigrant population is relatively small (9%), Frederick County experienced a 150% increase in its foreign-born population from 2000 to 2006 (Singer et al., 2009: 7).

The Frederick County Sheriff’s Office entered into a task force 287(g) agreement with ICE in February 2008 (Rodriguez et al., 2010: 24) and began running immigration checks on arrestees in August 2008. The local jail also entered into the 287(g) agreement and began immigration checks earlier that year. Police in Prince George’s County have also been running immigration checks on arrestees since at least 2007. Police in Montgomery and Charles counties reported in our 2009 survey that neither they nor their local jails conduct immigration checks.

On average, aggravated assaults and other violent crimes declined roughly 3% to 6% in the Maryland counties, and property crime declined 4%. Prince George’s County experienced reductions of 18% to 20% in violence, but other Maryland counties had relatively small increases or decreases, particularly in comparison to the changes in PWC.

8.6.4 Summary of Comparisons

In sum, comparisons of PWC to other jurisdictions in the Washington, DC area show that PWC was not entirely unique in the magnitude of its recent crime reductions. Crime, particularly violence, declined substantially in a number of jurisdictions around the area. Hence, general trends in northern Virginia and the wider DC region may have played some role in sustaining crime reductions in PWC even if they did not precipitate them. One such factor discussed elsewhere in this report is the decline in the residential construction market that occurred in several counties across the area beginning in 2006 and 2007.

At the same time, PWC had one of the largest drops in violence in the region, and it had the single largest reduction in aggravated assaults. Comparisons between PWC and other DC area localities are further complicated by the fact that a number of the comparison areas had some form of immigration enforcement during the study period. Nonetheless, there was no clear tendency across the region for crime to decline in places doing immigration checks (note especially the increases in crime in Loudoun and Frederick counties). However, the publicity surrounding the initial announcement of PWC’s immigration policy and the subsequent fear that it caused in the County’s Hispanic community were unique relative to the experience of other jurisdictions. In its original form, the PWC policy was more aggressive and far reaching than that of most other jurisdictions.

119 The figures for the Maryland counties were obtained from the Maryland Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention and are aggregated to include all law enforcement agencies in each county (see http://www.goccp.maryland.gov/msac/crime-statistics.php). The populations of these counties in 2009 ranged from approximately 144,000 in Charles County to approximately 964,000 in Montgomery County.
120 The city of Frederick, Maryland, which has a population of approximately 60,000, has its own police department. The Frederick Police Department has not entered into a 287(g) agreement and does not conduct immigration checks. However, its arrestees are still checked for immigration status by the local jail authorities.
121 The implementation date of this policy was not specified in our survey, but the agency did indicate that their policy had not changed in the last two years.
and its announcement by the PWC Board of County Supervisors generated much more publicity and controversy than did immigration enforcement efforts in other local areas. This notion is consistent with our earlier findings that violence in PWC began to drop after the announcement of the policy in July 2007. It is may also help to explain why the drop in violence was smaller in Manassas City, which is not under the authority of the PWC Board of County Supervisors and is not policed by PWCPD, than in the County that surrounds it.

8.7 PWCPD Officers’ Perceptions of Crime and Disorder Problems and the Policy’s Effectiveness in Controlling Them

Finally, as a complement to our analyses of trends in crime and CFS, we examine PWCPD officers’ perceptions of various crime and disorder problems in PWC as measured in our 2008 and 2009 surveys of PWCPD personnel. We also assess their views about the effectiveness of the policy in controlling crime and disorder as expressed in the surveys.

Using a four-point scale (“never”, “occasionally”, “often”, and “regularly/all the time”), the 2008 and 2009 PWCPD surveys asked officers about the extent to which they had observed several crime
and disorder problems in PWC. As shown in Table 8-6, these problems included violent and property crime, fear of crime, attacks and threats against officers, disorderly behavior, traffic problems, housing code violations, crime reporting, and witness cooperation. (Further detail about the survey is provided in Appendix C.) Table 8-6 also shows the average score for each item at time 1 and time 2. On average, officers witnessed most of these problems “occasionally.” Further, there was no change in officers’ views of the prevalence of these problems from 2008 to 2009. This is also consistent with our earlier findings that the policy had an early effect on serious assaults but no effect on most types of crime.

Table 8-6. Frequency with which Officers Witnessed Crime and Disorder Problems (1=never, 2=occasionally, 3=often, 4=regularly/all the time)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problems getting non-immigrant residents of PWC to report crime.</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems getting legal immigrant residents of PWC to report crime.</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems getting illegal immigrant residents of PWC to report crime.</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems getting witnesses to cooperate with the police.</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>2.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical attacks against officers.</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal threats against officers.</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent crimes in PWC.</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property crimes in PWC.</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with public disorder (e.g., loitering, public drinking, etc.)</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with traffic violations.</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems with housing code violations (e.g., occupancy violations)</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of crime in certain parts of PWC.</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=274

Problems that officers most commonly listed as occurring regularly/all the time included the following:

- Public disorder (e.g., loitering, public drinking, etc.) (T1=17.5%, T2=18.3%)
- Housing code violations (e.g., occupancy violations) (T1=16.6%, T2=15.5%)
- Traffic violations (T1=13.9%, T2=18.7%)
- Getting illegal immigrant residents of PWC to report crime (T1=12.7%, T2=9.5%)
- Property crimes in PWC (T1=7.6%, T2=6.9%)
- Fear of crime in certain parts of PWC (T1=6.7%, T2=7.9%)

Note that only about 10% to 13% of officers reported that getting illegal immigrants to report crime was a problem occurring regularly or all the time. However, in the second survey, about 30% reported that this problem occurred at least often if not regularly (this was down from 40% in the

---

122 The fall 2008 officer survey asked respondents how often they had witnessed these problems since the current policy’s implementation in July 2008. The fall 2009 officer survey asked how often they had witnessed them over the past year.
first survey). Although these figures provide no basis for assessing pre and post-policy changes in crime reporting by illegal immigrants, they reinforce our earlier caveat that the post-policy drop in violent crime may have been due in some measure to a decline in crime reporting by illegal immigrants.

Finally, in both surveys, approximately half of the surveyed officers agreed or strongly agreed that ‘the policy is an effective approach to reducing crime in PWC.” This shows that officers’ views are mixed on whether the policy has reduced crime in PWC and that this has not changed over time. This finding is consistent with the view often expressed by PWCPD personnel that illegal immigrants do not contribute heavily to serious crime in the County.123

8.8 A Note on Traffic Violations

Our investigation of the policy’s impact on crime has focused on major categories of serious and minor crime. Before concluding, however, we also note that the policy seems to have helped reduce some types of traffic violations involving illegal immigrants. From 2008 to 2009, for example, illegal immigrants declined as a percentage of people arrested for operating a vehicle without a license, from 14% in 2008 to 10% in 2009 (PWCPD, 2009: 16; 2010: 17).124 In addition, hit and run accidents dropped from 347 in 2006 to 245 in 2007 and to 182 in 2008 (see Figure 8-9).125 Although statistics on arrests of illegal immigrants for hit and run are only available for 2009—during which illegal immigrants accounted for 9.4% of these violators (PWCPD, 2010: 17)—this offense is believed to be one that involves a higher share of illegal immigrants. It is also difficult to attribute the sharp drop in hit and run accidents to other causes. Although total traffic crashes also declined 17% in 2007 and 7% in 2008 (PWCPD, 2008: 10; PWCPD, 2009: 17), the decline in hit and run accidents was steeper at 29% in 2007 and 26% in 2008.

123 However, other questions from the 2008 survey suggested that two-thirds of the officers felt that the policy has helped reduce both crime and disorder problems associated with illegal immigration (see our 2009 interim report).
124 The figures for 2008 are based on partial year data.
125 The data come from annual reports by the PWCPD Crash Investigations Unit. These figures include all hit-and-run accidents in the County that occur on public ways and are sufficiently serious to warrant reporting to the State Police. Reportable hit-and-run incidents either involve property damage greater than $1,000, or personal injury.
Subject to the caveats noted throughout this section, our investigation of data from several sources suggests that the immigration enforcement policy has not affected most forms of crime in PWC. Overall, illegal immigrants currently make up a relatively small proportion of arrestees for serious crimes, and a substantial majority of arrested illegal immigrants are charged with traffic offenses or misdemeanors, particularly public drunkenness and DUI. Given the lack of pre-policy data on arrests of illegal immigrants, we cannot determine whether or not those proportions have changed since the policy’s implementation.

Our analysis of trends over several years in both offense reports and calls for police service indicates that most types of serious and minor crime did not decline (or increase) following the policy’s announcement in July 2007 or its implementation in March 2008. Other indicators also suggest that enforcement of the policy over time has not led to ongoing reductions in crime: arrests of illegal immigrants for criminal and traffic violations rose from 2008 to 2009, and post-policy surveys assessing trends in both crime victimization among County residents and perceptions of crime and disorder among PWCPD officers have shown no significant changes in levels of crime and disorder since the policy’s implementation in 2008. Finally, officers’ opinions are quite mixed as to whether the policy has reduced crime overall, and their general view is that immigrants do not contribute heavily to serious crime in PWC.

However, our analyses also show that PWC experienced a substantial reduction in violent crime, namely aggravated assault, following the announcement of the policy and the implementation of immigration checks by the local jail (ADC) in July 2007. This decline coincided very closely with the announcement of the policy, which makes it less likely that the drop was precipitated by factors like the County’s economic trends or other PWCPD crime-reduction initiatives. Further, while several
jurisdictions in the Washington, DC area had reductions in violence in recent years, the decline in aggravated assault in PWC during 2008 and 2009 was greater than that experienced by any other large county or city in Northern Virginia or suburban Maryland, including those doing varying levels of immigration enforcement. All of this suggests that aggravated assaults in PWC declined in response to the publicity and controversy surrounding the PWC Board of County Supervisors’ announcement of the initial version of the policy, which required officers to inquire about the immigration status of all lawfully detained persons that they suspected of being illegal immigrants. Once this decline occurred, it is conceivable that ongoing enforcement of the policy, economic conditions in the County, and perhaps other regional factors helped to prevent any rebound from occurring.

The decline in aggravated assault likely reflects a combination of reduced offending, reduced victimization, and possibly reduced crime reporting among illegal immigrants. We cannot say how much of the drop was due to each of these factors, but PWCPD data on the ethnicity of victims and arrestees for aggravated assault tentatively suggest that a decline in victimization and/or reporting account for at least part of the decline. Without a more detailed incident-level assessment of assault cases before and after the policy, it is not clear why the policy would have an impact specific to this type of crime. We speculate, however, that the policy’s announcement reduced serious assaults by reducing the number and/or changing the behavior of people at risk of becoming involved in disputes, particularly young, unattached immigrant men. Reporting effects may have also been more pronounced for aggravated assaults because, relative to other offenses like robbery, the actors involved (and perhaps the witnesses as well) are more likely to be family members, friends, or acquaintances (e.g., see Rand, 2009; Roberts, 2008). The propensity of actors or witnesses to notify police in these situations may well have declined after the policy’s announcement. As discussed above, a substantial minority of PWCPD officers, about one-third, believe that reporting of crime by illegal immigrants is still a significant problem in PWC. Our surveys of PWC residents run counter to this notion, showing that crime reporting by Hispanics is equivalent to that of non-Hispanics, and that reporting by Hispanics did not decline from 2008 to 2010. Nevertheless, those figures are based on small numbers of respondents (which could make them unreliable), and they cannot be used to specifically assess crime reporting by illegal immigrants or to examine before and after changes associated with the policy.126

The magnitude of the drop in aggravated assault following the policy’s announcement, about 27% according to our estimates, may also imply that the policy had collateral effects extending to assaults that did not directly involve illegal immigrants. Post-policy arrest data suggest that illegal immigrants are currently the perpetrators of 9% of aggravated assaults in PWC.127 The notion that an additional 27% of aggravated assaults involved illegal immigrants as offenders and/or victims prior to the policy is perhaps debatable. Again, there are no historical data on crimes by illegal immigrants that can be used to address this issue. However, it is conceivable that the policy also reduced assaults or reporting of assaults by people who are not illegal immigrants. Hispanic residents connected to illegal immigrants in some way—through, for instance, household residence or networks of family and friends—may have become less likely to report assaults to police for fear that they might draw

126 The decline in aggravated assaults did not extend to simple assaults, which suggests that people were less deterred from committing and reporting these particular offenses. Perpetrators and victims may have felt that arrests or extensive police investigations were less likely in these cases. PWCPD arrest data also indicate that illegal immigrants are more heavily involved in aggravated assaults than simple assaults; in 2009, illegal immigrants accounted for 9% of arrestees for aggravated assaults and 3% of arrestees for simple assault (PWCPD, 2010: 16-17).

127 This assumes that the composition of offenders who are not arrested is comparable to that of arrestees.
the attention of police to their family or associates who were in PWC illegally. Some legal Hispanic residents may have also felt that police in PWC would be generally suspicious of them. Research outside PWC suggests that controversies surrounding immigration enforcement can reduce the inclination of Hispanics to report crime to police (Vidales et al., 2009), and our own surveys in PWC show that Hispanics became less satisfied with PWCPD immediately following the policy’s initiation.

In addition, accounts from our informant interviews indicate that social life and routine activities became more subdued in PWC’s Hispanic community following the policy. Some restaurants, nightclubs and entertainment spots, for example, closed or had fewer patrons. Some neighborhoods became quieter with less active street life. After the announcement of the policy, these sorts of places may have drawn fewer people of all sorts—native residents and visitors as well as legal and illegal immigrants. Consequently, there may have been fewer places and social situations that created conditions conducive to assaultive behavior (such as crowds of people drinking in nightclubs).

On balance, our conclusions about the policy’s impact on crime must be cautious, due in large part to the lack of historical data on crimes committed by illegal immigrants. The announcement of the policy does seem to have caused a substantial decline in aggravated assault, but this decline could reflect a reduction in reporting of crime as well as a reduction in serious assaults. The policy has not affected most other forms of serious and minor crime, though we note that it seems to have alleviated some traffic-related offenses, notably hit and run accidents. There clearly are limits to using subsequent deportation by ICE as a crime fighting strategy, since many of those detained are not deported and some who are deported ultimately return to the area. Since the County does not receive any data from ICE on the disposition of illegal aliens turned over to ICE, the efficacy of the strategy is more difficult to assess. We nevertheless reiterate that the current version of the policy, which mandates immigration checks only for arrestees, appears to be a reasonable way of targeting illegal immigrants who commit criminal violations, and that there is fairly broad agreement on this as a goal for law enforcement.
9 The Policy’s Effects on Neighborhood Problems

One of the major reasons there was so much support for the immigration enforcement policy was related to negative changes in the quality of some PWC residents’ lives. To investigate the possibility that the policy improved conditions, we examine residents’ comments about the policy on the annual community surveys, review results from questions on these surveys about specific neighborhood conditions, examine data from the County’s Neighborhood Services Division, which handles residents’ complaints about overcrowded housing and property upkeep, and look further into recent data from the U.S. Census. All of these are relevant to evaluating the success of the County’s immigration policy in its goal of reducing overcrowded housing problems, neighborhood nuisances and public disorder, such as loitering at day labor sites and public intoxication.\textsuperscript{128}

9.1 Results from informant and community interviews

Our interviews in 2008 with neighborhood activists and County staff suggested that the passage of the policy brought immediate and noticeable changes in some blocks and streets. Proponents of the policy told us excitedly of particular houses that had been occupied by several families or by numbers of young men (whom they presumed to be illegal immigrants) which were suddenly vacated. Opponents of the policy blamed the policy for causing immigrants to leave and therefore contributing to the County’s growing problem with vacant properties that developed as the mortgage crisis intensified.

Our police focus groups and our informant interviews agreed that the number of men hanging out at the County’s several active day labor sites dropped sharply when the policy was passed. However, interviews conducted later in our evaluation period were more ambiguous about changed neighborhood conditions. There was general agreement that the day labor sites had become more populated again by the middle of 2009; police focus groups and informant interviews agreed on this.

As for other neighborhood conditions, opinions varied. In 2010 we conducted eighteen in-depth interviews with randomly selected respondents who had taken our citizen survey in that year. We asked them if there had been any notable changes in their neighborhoods. Only two of these respondents described any dramatic changes over the past several years. Those two reported that houses in their neighborhood had become boarding houses for multiple residents in the years leading up to the foreclosure crisis and immigration law:

I guess Prince William County passed the law, the immigration laws, and all of a sudden, all those rooming houses stopped being rooming houses. …Well, I think it was a combination of between the immigration laws, I guess a lot of the boarders, I guess, moved I guess moved out of the County and the owners, I guess, couldn’t afford to pay the mortgages and then the mortgage crisis hit and they all went up for foreclosure. Well, in the last year, year and a half. No, maybe two years now. I don’t know, when did the big foreclosure strike? They all went up for foreclosure and actually on our street, we had— I counted at one time last year I guess we had like 15 houses up for foreclosure and now we have one. …People have bought the others. Actually, on both sides of us, we have some nice new neighbors. …Well, it seemed like we only had a real problem here [with vacant houses] for like maybe six months…Well, it’s totally changed. It’s like the neighbors on the one side of us, we used to call it a village because there were about—it had to be 15, 20 people there living there all the time. Yeah, and the one house on the [other] side, and they lost their house to foreclosure [too], and now it’s two couples [who live in the houses]. They’re both young couples, you know, kind of Spanish, but they each have a child and they’re just—they’re really nice.

\textsuperscript{128} The changes in arrests for public drunkenness were addressed in section 8 above and are not repeated in this section.
Six people reported that there had been a lot growth and new neighborhoods built in the last five years. The remaining ten people reported that there had been little change in their neighborhoods over the past several years. These ten people reported that they lived in very different types of neighborhoods: Two people indicated that they lived in neighborhoods that had insufficient street parking, but they also indicated that street parking was a long-term problem. Another suggested that there was insufficient parking because some of the older neighborhoods were built when families only had one car per household and now families have two or more, which made it difficult for people to park all their cars on the street.

We found similarly mixed results in the thirty focused in-depth interviews we conducted in 2010 as follow-ups to the community survey. Reports on neighborhood change were decidedly mixed, with many respondents having no major changes to report.

Although the number of in-depth interviews is not large, the results—taken together with our informant interviews and other data discussed below—suggest that some undetermined number of overcrowded houses did either become vacant or returned to normal levels of occupancy shortly after the policy went into effect. But they also suggest that most neighborhoods in the County were not changed, that they changed in response to other causes, or that they changed in slower and more subtle respects that residents did not generally notice.

9.2 Comments about policy implementation

As discussed in section 10.2 below, our annual citizen surveys from 2008 onward asked respondents how satisfied they were with the job the police were doing in implementing the immigration enforcement policy. Those who were “very satisfied” with the enforcement were asked, in an open-ended format, to say why they were satisfied. Appendix H lists the responses we got to this question. In the annual Citizen Survey of late Spring 2008, about 20 percent of residents who reported that they were very satisfied with the job that the police were doing volunteered that they were satisfied with the Police Department’s work because community conditions had improved. In 2009, 39 percent explained their satisfaction in these terms, and in 2010, 35 percent mentioned positive results of the County’s policy. A few of these respondents (around five percent of the very satisfied) specifically mentioned declines in day laborers and other people loitering on street corners and the Seven-Eleven. Reductions in crime were mentioned a bit more frequently, by 12 percent of very satisfied respondents in 2010.

We also received some reports about illegal immigrants moving out of overcrowded houses in the community surveys, especially in 2008 directly after the new policy was implemented. Several of the comments transcribed by our telephone interviewers and shown in Appendix H specifically mention alleviation of overcrowded housing issues:

It is helping. Twenty-one people were living all in one house beside him with 9-13 cars parked outside. He has reported zoning violations to the county with no result but since the enforcement these folks have disappeared and moved out of the area.

My husband and I live across the street from a house that has had a lot of people there and they have really stayed on top of that. It was bad at first but they stayed right on it and it is no longer a problem.

A larger number of comments described illegal immigrants moving away, but did not mention overcrowding.
9.3 Survey questions on neighborhood conditions

In an attempt to learn more about community perceptions of change in neighborhood conditions, we added more direct questions to the 2009 and 2010 community surveys. We focused on four problem areas:

- “residential overcrowding: that is, too many people living at one residence”
- Problems “with vacant houses or properties that are not well kept up”
- Problems “with occupied homes or apartments that are not well kept up”
- Problems “with loitering, that is: groups of people hanging out on street corners or in store parking lots”

For the first three problems, respondents were asked to think about their neighborhood. For loitering, they were asked to think about “places you drive or walk to in Prince William County.” For each problem, they were first asked “how big a problem is there now,” and they could answer “a big problem,” “somewhat of a problem,” or “not a problem.” They were then asked:

Compared to one year ago, has this problem gotten a lot better, gotten a little better, stayed about the same, gotten a little worse, or gotten a lot worse?

Tables Table 9-1 and Table 9-2 show the results for this series of questions. The tables show that County residents are divided in their perceptions about each of these problems. Residential overcrowding is not a problem in the neighborhood for over 70 percent of residents. Overcrowding is a big neighborhood problem for only 7 to 8 percent of residents; the rest see it as somewhat of a problem. There is no significant change in perception of the problem from 2009 to 2010. Table 9-2 shows that there are somewhat more people who see this problem improving than those who think it is worsening, but most residents see no change in the overcrowding problem. In interpreting these results, it should be kept in mind that over-occupancy does not present itself very prominently to the outside observer. Complainants to the Neighborhood Services Division, for example, very often describe an overcrowding issue as “too many cars,” excessive trash or things stored outside inappropriately while saying that they see a lot of people coming and going. We do not know if survey respondents were able to translate these conditions into a judgment about “residential overcrowding.”

The problem of upkeep of vacant houses, a problem which emerged strongly in the 2007-2008 mortgage crisis, was seen as a big neighborhood problem by over 10 percent of residents in 2009. This percentage went down significantly in 2010, with only 6 percent thinking it was a big problem. And there was a strong, significant shift in perceptions of improvement in this problem. In 2009, more residents saw the problem worsening over the previous years than improving, while just the opposite was the case in 2010 when nearly 30 percent saw improvement and only 10 percent saw it getting worse. This is the one problem of the four in which clear improvement is registered in the responses from our annual survey of the county-wide population. This result reflects real change in the County, as bargain-hunters have begun to buy up the vacant properties, new tenants or owners have begun to occupy them, lending institutions increased their capacity for maintaining vacant properties, and the County developed some more effective tools for ensuring that still-vacant properties are kept up.129

---

129 The county now has legal authority to mow tall weeds or grass and to remove abandoned trash from vacant properties, with or without the owner’s permission, and then to recover the cost by placing a lien on
Table 9-1. How big are these problems? 2009, 2010 survey results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How big a problem is ...</th>
<th>A big problem</th>
<th>Somewhat of a problem</th>
<th>Not a problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential Overcrowding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>73.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upkeep of Vacant Houses*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upkeep of Occupied Homes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>73.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loitering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>51.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Asterisk indicates that there is a significant difference between 2009 and 2010.
### Table 9-2. Did problems get better or worse? 2009, 2010 surveys.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compare to one year ago ...</th>
<th>A lot better</th>
<th>A little better</th>
<th>About the same</th>
<th>A little worse</th>
<th>A lot worse</th>
<th>Never had this problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential Overcrowding 2009</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>57.4%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upkeep of Vacant Houses* 2009</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>57.3%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upkeep of Occupied Homes 2009</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loitering* 2009</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>57.5%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>64.6%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Asterisk indicates that there is a significant difference between 2009 and 2010.
Of the four problems we asked about, the upkeep of occupied properties is the least widespread, with only three to five percent of residents saying this is a big problem in their neighborhood. The great majority of residents say either that there has been no change in this problem in the past year or that they never had this problem, and there is no significant change from 2009 to 2010 in the number who say it has gotten better or worse.

Loitering, as seen at the County’s informal but fairly fixed day labor sites, is more likely than the others to be seen as big problem or somewhat of a problem than the other three we asked about, with only about half of County residents saying it is not a problem in the places where they go. While the increase in the percent saying it is a ‘big’ problem is not statistically significant, Table 9-2 (page 111) shows a significant decrease in the percentage of respondents who thought the problem was getting better. These results fit with the qualitative data we gathered, suggesting that the problem was initially lessened quite noticeably, but then gradually came back as men became more comfortable with the immigration policy and the day laborers returned to their established areas for obtaining work.

9.4 Day labor sites declined temporarily but are still active

In the course of our ride-alongs with police officers in September 2010, we had occasion to make direct observations of the County’s active day labor sites and to learn more about their operation from accounts of the officers on the beat. There are three main sites where day laborers gather. One is at a convenience store just off Route 234 in the Coverstone area of Prince William, near Manassas. The other two are located on Route 1 in Woodbridge, not far from each other. One is at a convenience store, with groups of men also congregating on adjacent, partially wooded church property, where they had—for a time—been given permission to gather, and others waiting for work in the outlying portions of a shopping-center parking lot, directly across the highway from the convenience store. The other Woodbridge location is just a short distance to the north, outside a taco restaurant and near to the entrance to a mobile home park that is home to many immigrants from Mexico. The officers explained that the workers tend to sort themselves by nationality, with the first Woodbridge location being frequented by men from Central America, and the other being a gathering place for Mexican men.

Fairly late on two successive autumn weekday mornings (between 9:00 and 11:00 am) we observed a combined total of about 100 men waiting for work at these three sites. The men waiting at these sites all appeared to be Hispanic. The job market was very quiet at that time of the morning, as we did not observe any contractors arriving or being solicited for work during nearly an hour of total observation time. Still, the men waited, congregating in small groups and chatting while watching for any signs of someone looking for workers. We assume that there is more job traffic at earlier hours. We can also infer that these sites serve as social gathering places for unemployed men as much as they serve as effective spot labor markets.

The convenience store on Route 1 allows the men to congregate during the day without complaint to the police. However, in the evening hours the store broadcasts an annoying electronic chirping sound from loudspeakers around its property, which seems to be effective in preventing loitering by teenagers after dark at that location.

Police officers report that the day labor sites present only minor problems from a law-enforcement perspective. As long as the men stay on private property, they are not seen as violators unless the store managers file a complaint; and the store managers at the three sites appear to be quite accom-
modating of their presence. If there is a complaint, the first police response is to ‘trespass’ the offender, which means a form is read, signed, and filed for future reference to show that the property owner has declared the offender to be a trespasser and notified him not to come onto the property. On the strength of that, if the incident is repeated, the officer would then have grounds for an arrest on trespassing charges. According to the officers, such arrests are rare. More common, they say, is that some men start to drink alcoholic beverages as the day wears on, so that occasional intervention or arrests for public drunkenness are needed. At one point, the police learned of a man who was selling marijuana at one of the sites; when they ‘trespassed’ him (lacking evidence for a drug arrest in that instance) he left the area and never returned.

Officers shared their impression that moving vans do not seem to solicit for day labor at the three main sites, which are dominated by Hispanic workers. A fourth, smaller day labor site is located off the main highway and near to the warehouse locations of several area moving companies. This is where moving trucks sometimes pick up their extra labor. On the day we observed, that site was occupied by six men: five Anglo whites and an African-American.

“Casual” labor markets may operate in the legal shadows, but they serve an important function in the economy, linking marginal workers with paid employment that might otherwise be out of their reach for a variety of reasons, and allowing employers immediate access to labor without the usual (and the legally required) red tape. Given the needs these sites serve, it is unlikely that they can easily be made to go away. But it should also be noted that the problem of loitering at these sites is mentioned quite regularly by our survey respondents as one of the presenting problems associated with illegal immigration. Some respondents (females primarily) spontaneously reported feeling vulnerable or unsafe when their errands take them to a convenience store surrounded by dozens of idle men.

The Board of County Supervisors recently passed new legislation to assist in control of day labor sites. The ordinance, passed in July 2010, prohibits distribution of literature to occupants of motor vehicles on highways, roadways and medians and also prohibits sale of merchandise or services to occupants of motor vehicles on highways or public roadways and medians. This effectively prohibits men from soliciting for work on a public street. (This law was already in effect at the time of our observation of the day labor sites). As long as the men looking to be hired as day laborers stay on the parking lots of the convenience stores and shopping centers that allow their presence without complaint, they are not subject to intervention from the police (unless they break some other law).

9.5 Data from the Neighborhood Services Division

The County’s Neighborhood Services Division, a part of the Department of Public Works, is responsible for Property Code Enforcement [PCE] and also runs a variety of community-based programs aimed at identifying problems and encouraging such problems to be solved ‘neighbor to neighbor’ through voluntary compliance. The Division has shared with us its statistical reports and information on its PCE program initiatives. Their statistics are particularly relevant to our assessment of whether residential overcrowding was lessened by the adoption of the immigration policy, and whether the problems with vacant housing might have been worsened by it. However, as will be evident below, for a variety of reasons these statistics prove to be inconclusive in their measurement of trends.

---

130 Examples of these comments can be seen in Appendix H, which lists open-ended comments to our 2008 question about satisfaction with enforcement of the policy.
As can be seen in Figure 9-1, there has been a very large increase in the number of PCE complaints handled by the division, especially in the number initiated by complaint. These numbers are driven by several factors. Underlying the trend is the simple fact that Prince William County’s housing stock includes, in some areas, a high proportion of aging structures, dating back to waves of suburban growth in the 1960s and 1970s. The sharp increase in cases handled by the Division in 2005 was accompanied by a significant increase in staffing. The rise in cases of all types also coincides with the increase in the presence of immigrants in the County from 2000 to 2006. But another driver of the caseload is the volume of citizen complaints about violations. Starting in 2007, there were organized efforts by activist groups to bring possible overcrowding violations to the attention of authorities. However, a large proportion of overcrowding complaints turn out, upon investigation, to be unfounded once the housing situation is assessed against the letter of the law. Nevertheless, as the department continued to work in closer liaison with neighborhood groups, the volume of formal PCE complaints of all types increased further, with more than 7,000 cases being handled annually in 2008 and 2009.

Figure 9-1. Annual Property Code Enforcement cases, PWC Neighborhood Services

In the years between 2005 and 2008, the number of complaints to the Neighborhood Services Division rose dramatically, from 3,341 in FY 2005 to 7,126 in FY 2008. The number of founded violations (of all types), however, dropped from 97 percent of all complaints to 69 percent of all complaints, although the absolute number of founded violations rose, from 3,226 to 4,975. Although these figures indicate that residents were making a higher proportion of unfounded complaints, which represents their concerns over the quality of life in their neighborhoods, they also represent actual changes in the neighborhoods during those years.

Table 9-3 shows the specific trends in occupancy complaints (i.e., complaints about overcrowded houses). The rapid rise in complaints about occupancy (associated with both increased problems and increased activism by residents on the issue) is seen from 2004 to 2006. Comparison of the second and third column shows that many occupancy complaints resulted in no violations, but many also resulted in violations being found other than actual violations of the occupancy ordinances. In fact, many occupancy complaints are expressed by the complainant in terms of parking issues, abandoned vehicles, or bulk trash on the premises of the property. For example, in FY 2008 there were 510 complaints revolving around occupancy issues. Of these, 237 or 46 percent resulted in no violations.

Table 9-3: Trends in Occupancy Complaints

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Complaints</th>
<th>Violations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY04</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY05</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY06</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY07</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY08</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY09</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

violation being found, leaving over half in which a violation was found. But only in 61 cases, representing 12 percent of the complaints and 22 percent of the violations, was the violation actually related to the occupancy ordinances. The others were violations of parking, refuse, control of tall grass and weeds, or other areas covered by the property code. Another factor affecting these statistics was the Division’s active efforts to educate the public about how to identify probable overcrowding problems and make and document complaints; this also helped to increase the proportion of cases that were, upon investigation, found to be valid by the Division.

**Table 9-3. Occupancy complaints, 2004-2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY</th>
<th>Occupancy Complaints</th>
<th>All Violations Found</th>
<th>Occupancy Related Violations</th>
<th>All PCE Complaints</th>
<th>All PCE Violations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>7,891</td>
<td>5,593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>7,010</td>
<td>5,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>7,126</td>
<td>4,965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>3,977</td>
<td>3,668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4,077</td>
<td>4,343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3,341</td>
<td>3,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,271</td>
<td>972</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another change that affects the Division’s statistics is that they introduced in 2008 new tools for investigation that proved to be quite effective. For example, the Division required that evening inspections be performed as part of investigating overcrowding complaints. This involved paying overtime wages to staff, but made it more likely that the number of occupants in a household would be accurately assessed (since more occupants would be home from work and school in the evening).

Figure 9-2 plots the trends in overcrowding complaints handled by the Neighborhood Services Division. The figure cogently summarizes the seemingly contradictory trends. Complaints about
overcrowded housing surge in 2005 and 2006, years of peak migration into the County, and then recede noticeably in the years after the immigration policy is put into effect. On the other hand, the number of founded occupancy complaints—a small but increasing fraction of the occupancy complaints—shows a continuous increase. We can conclude that the increase in founded occupancy complaints is a product of both better-developed complaints from the public and more effective tools for investigation and enforcement.

**Figure 9-2. Occupancy complaints by fiscal year, 2004-2010.**

The map in Figure 9-3 shows the geographic location of all PCE violations (founded complaints) in the three year period from 2005 to 2008. It is clear in the map that violations of various kinds can and do occur in all parts of the County. It is also clear that overcrowding violations were concentrated in the two areas of high concentration of Hispanic immigrants, with overcrowding violations especially prevalent in the Sudley area, immediately north of Manassas and Manassas Park. Neighborhood Services Division staff told us in interviews we conducted with them that they tended to receive more complaints about overcrowding from that area. This pattern may be due in part to the fact that the activist citizen group Help Save Manassas was organizing resident complaint activity in that part of the County. Staff indicated that similar conditions that might exist in the eastern sections of the County seemed less likely to generate complaints from residents. However, the map does show that overcrowding violations were found in Dale City and Woodbridge. The pattern in this map helps to clarify the pattern of responses we reviewed above in section 9.3; many residents have little or no perceived overcrowded housing cases in their neighborhoods, while for others the complaint was fairly frequent and acute.
If we look in more detail at the nature of the changes at the time the immigration policy was adopted, it suggests that problems associated with overcrowding rose through June 2006 (a year before the Board of County Supervisors passed the first immigration enforcement resolution) and then began to fall. Between July 2005 and June 2006, parking on an unimproved surface violations (in other words, parking on lawns), which is associated with overcrowding, reached a high of 828
violations before dropping to 516 in the period July 2007 and June 2008. These data support the strong feeling in the community that there were overcrowding problems in some neighborhoods. Parking-on-grass complaints dropped somewhat as the policy was getting off the ground.

**Figure 9-4, Founded Neighborhood Services Complaints, 2005–2008.**

*Data on maintaining a dump heap and parking on an unimproved surface come from fiscal years (July 1 through June 30). The weed and tall grass violations refer to calendar years for the 2005–2006 and fiscal years for 2007 and 2008. Thus, the weed and tall grass violations for 2007 are for only part of the year (January–June 2007), and the drop in 2007 for those violation is due to that change in the period. Had all of 2007 been counted in that column, we would expect to see a steady rise in weed and tall grass violations. Data retrieved from a September 9, 2008 presentation on the immigration enforcement policy to the Board of County Supervisors.*

However, here again we have evidence that two forces—the economic downturn and the policy—were at work in ameliorating the neighborhood overcrowding that had motivated the policy. At the same time that complaints associated with overcrowding were diminishing, complaints associated with vacant homes were rising: Total weed and tall grass violations rose from 561 in 2006 to 1,128 in 2008. The fact that a large decline in parking on unimproved surfaces occurred between July 1, 2006 and June 30, 2007 may indicate that problems with overcrowding were already declining prior to the introduction of the policy. This suggests that the foreclosure crisis accounted for at least some of the drop in overcrowding; stricter code enforcement and increased staffing at Neighborhood Services could also have played a role. In addition, the County modified its overcrowding ordinance on May 19, 2009, making it easier for a case to be judged as being in violation. The current housing occupancy ordinance is shown in Appendix F.

In summary, the statistics on activity by the Neighborhood Services Division show a large increase in overcrowded housing complaints, but little sign of a drop-off in such complaints (or in violations) after the introduction of the illegal immigration policy. However, these statistics reflect not only the prevalence of actual overcrowding violations but a combination of changes that affected the statistics: increased complaint activity from one part of the County especially; increased staffing; enhanced education of citizens and liaison of the Division with neighborhood groups; new enforcement tools such as the after-hours inspections; and changes in the underlying law. The statistics, in

---

132 The data for parking-on-grass [POG] complaints are affected by a zoning change. Some of these complaints were found to be unsubstantiated and/or not made since they were grandfathered in by the POG zoning change.

133 The Neighborhood Services Division also provided data on other founded violations, such as maintaining outside storage, complaints involving inoperative vehicles on the property, and complaints about housing maintenance.
short, reflect increased and increasingly effective enforcement as much or more than they reflect an increase in the magnitude of the problem. In fact, it is quite possible that overcrowding was alleviated by all this enforcement in that, according to the Division, 95% of all PCE complaints result in voluntary remediation.

9.6 Changes in complex households in the Hispanic communities

We can turn to the U.S. Census’s ACS PUMS data for a different statistical window on the overcrowding issue. It should be recognized that some ethnic minority groups in the United States—Hispanics and Asians in particular—are known to have a different pattern of household occupancy than do the majority of Americans. They are more likely to live in “complex households” that include more than the members of one nuclear family. This means quite simply that a neighborhood populated by Hispanics is likely to have more adults per household than a neighborhood that is populated by Anglo whites. As some neighborhoods in Prince William changed by becoming more Hispanic, they also became more crowded. The number of cars parked outside a typical home in these neighborhoods would be higher. If the household members in the complex family are all related to one another by blood or marriage, then it is unlikely that they could be found to be violating the County’s occupancy ordinance, which is reproduced in Appendix F. Yet to a worried neighbor the household might indeed seem “overcrowded.”

The American Community Survey allows us to look at the changing prevalence of complex households. It includes questions that allow the Census Bureau to identify the relationship of each household member to the first person counted on the inventory of persons for the household. From these data, the ACS derives measures of how many families a household includes, and how many subfamilies a family includes. A family consists of related persons who live together. A subfamily includes either a couple within the family (other than the primary person and his or her partner) or a mother-child pair within the family (other than the primary person or primary couple and her/their child). To see whether there have been changes in occupancy in Prince William’s households as a result of the immigration resolution and its associated population changes in the Hispanic community, we computed a simple indicator of complex households, using these ACS variables. We count a household as “complex” if it either (1) includes more than one family or (2) includes one or more subfamilies. This is a solid indicator of what, in common parlance, might be thought of families ‘doubling up’ in housing.

When we look at the metropolitan area as a whole, the tendency of Hispanic households to be more complex is strongly evident: totaling across the years 2005 to 2008, for the entire DC metro area, the percent of Hispanics who reside in a complex household (34 percent) is more than twice as high as the percent of non-Hispanics in such households (16 percent). Although complex households are common in Hispanic families generally, it is reasonable to expect that illegal immigrants, whether single or partnered, would be especially likely to live with others who are not in their immediate family and thus they and the others in their household (who might be legally present or not) would be counted as living in a complex household.

---

Figure 9-5. Complex households among Hispanics, PWC+cities and rest of metro area, 2005-2008.

Figure 9-5, based on our analysis of ACS PUMS data, shows the percent of Hispanics in Prince William who reside in a complex household, tracking changes in this percentage from 2005 to 2008 and comparing it to the balance of the metropolitan area. As the immigration wave peaked in Prince William, there was a dramatic increase in this percentage, changing from 27 percent of Hispanics in 2005 to 40 percent living in complex households in 2006. As the policy was proposed, passed, and implemented, this percentage dropped somewhat, standing at 34 percent in 2008. That was about the same as the percentage for Hispanics in the rest of the metro area. This result helps to clarify the somewhat confusing picture from the Neighborhood Services Division’s statistics. The Division’s data show surging levels of complaint and increasing numbers of violations, but the ACS PUMS data indicate that the net result was indeed a modest reduction, after the implementation of the immigration policy, in the number of Hispanic residents who were living in complex households.

Fortunately for our analysis, Prince William County is big enough that the PUMS allocates two study areas (called PUMAs) to the County. As shown on the map in Appendix I, one includes the entire western portion of the County, as well as encompassing Manassas and Manassas Park. The other includes the eastern portion, including Woodbridge and all the population along I-95 and Route 1. Figure 9-6 shows the trend in complex households in these two broad regions, which together coincide exactly with the boundaries of the County (with the two small cities also included).

It is clear that the trend in complex households for Hispanics was quite different in the two parts of the County. In the Western PUMA (which includes the two cities), the percentage of Hispanics in complex households rose from a third to nearly a half from 2005 to 2006, but then fell sharply in 2007 and 2008, when the percentage stood at about 28 percent, lower than the 2005 percentage and lower than the 34 percent prevalent for Hispanics in the rest of the metro area in that year. This is the pattern we might expect if illegal immigrants were leaving the County, but it could also be the result of vigorous enforcement of the property code and the occupancy law. Like the Western part of the County, the Eastern PUMA saw a big increase in complex households from 2005 to 2006, but the percentage stayed the same in 2007 and then actually rose, reaching almost 40 percent in 2008. This pattern could be the result of some Hispanics losing their homes as a result of the mortgage...
crisis, and then doubling up with other family members or friends, creating new complex house-
holds. The contrast in the patterns of change between West and East echoes the pattern we saw in
the map of violations (Figure 9-3), with more complaints and correspondingly more enforcement
activity in the Western end of the County, just outside Manassas and Manassas Park. In short, these
data, together with the map, suggest that overcrowded housing was reduced much more in the parts
of the County near Manassas than in the Woodbridge and Dale City areas. Again, this helps to make
understandable the mixed results from our survey question about overcrowding that was asked of
County-wide samples of residents: the degree of observable improvement in overcrowding de-
pended greatly on where in the County one was living.

Figure 9-6. Complex households, West PWC+cities and East PWC, 2005-2008.

Indeed, there is some support for this conclusion in the survey data from 2009 and 2010. Since we
know the ZIP code in which each respondent resides, we can group them into three broad geo-
graphic groups, corresponding to those who live near Manassas, those who live near Woodbridge or
Dale City and those who live in parts of the County where Hispanics immigrants are not numerous.
In 2009, the percentages saying that overcrowding had gotten a little or a lot better were about 22%
in the area around Manassas and about 21% in the Woodbridge/Dale City area, compared to only
10% in the outlying parts of the County. In 2010, however, there is greater difference between the
first two areas, with 18 percent of the Manassas-area respondents saying overcrowding is better,
compared to 14 percent in the Woodbridge/Dale City area and about 12 percent in the rest of the
County. Correspondingly, in 2010 there are fewer respondents in the Manassas area who say over-
crowding has gotten worse (9%) than in the Woodbridge/Dale area (14%). These are not dramatic
differences, but they do corroborate the difference in areas suggested by our analysis of the ACS
PUMS data and the Neighborhood Services map of overcrowding violations.

9.7 Summary

To assess the degree to which the County’s immigration enforcement policy caused a lessening of
specific neighborhood problems, we have looked at data from several sources. Some of the results
are seemingly contradictory and there is considerable division among our survey respondents about
how bad the neighborhood problems are and whether or not they have noticeably improved. The
aging of the County’s housing stock in the areas that were built up thirty or more years ago means
that some increase in neighborhood problems would have occurred irrespective of the increase in
immigration that the County experienced after 2000. Putting together all the indicators, we are
nevertheless able to reach a few conclusions about the policy’s effects.

- Prior to the policy’s implementation, there was a significant problem of overcrowded housing in
  the County, associated with the increasing presence of illegal immigrants but localized in a few
  areas. There were also several active day labor sites that caused real concern for some residents.

- We have strong, clear reports from informants, in-depth community interviews, and respondents
to the annual community telephone survey that particular overcrowded houses became vacant or
changed to normal occupancy very soon after the policy was passed.

- Some community survey respondents who are satisfied with police efforts to enforce the policy
mention specific improvements in neighborhood conditions as a reason for their satisfaction.

- Survey respondents are divided on the extent of the neighborhood problems and the degree to
which they have improved or worsened. We attribute this partly to differences in where they
live, as each of the problems was highly localized.

- Vacant housing became a major neighborhood issue at around the time the resolution was
implemented. This development was primarily a result of the mortgage crisis, but the problem
may have been worsened by the flight of some immigrants from the County.

- Responses to the annual citizen survey, as well as reports of informants, show that the problems
with upkeep of vacant properties have lessened significantly in the last year.

- There are consistent reports in our qualitative data that loitering at day labor sites went down
sharply when the policy was first implemented, but then returned to significant levels of activity
at the sites within a year or so.

- Our direct observation and interviews with police officers in the Fall of 2010 verified that the
three main day labor sites in the County continue to be quite active, involving scores of primarily
Hispanic men each day. New legislation was passed in 2010 to limit the activities of day laborers
soliciting for work on public streets, but the day labor problem in the County persists.

- There was a marked increase in the capabilities of the Neighborhood Services Division to guide
and respond to complaints from residents about Property Code Enforcement issues. In the
years before, during and after the policy’s implementation the Division expanded its staff, im-
proved its enforcement tools and practices, worked with neighborhood groups to educate them
about how to make effective complaints, and benefited from a modification of the County’s oc-
cupancy ordinance. As a result, the Division’s caseload of complaints did not recede as the pol-
cy was put into effect, but continues at a high level.

- There were more complaints and founded violations of overcrowding and related property
violations in the areas near Manassas than in the Eastern portion of the County. Perhaps as a
result of this, there is evidence in both the ACS PUMS data and in our community survey data
that overcrowded housing (or housing that may appear overcrowded to some residents even if
not in violation of code) was reduced in the area around Manassas but did not decrease in the
Eastern part of the County.

- As noted in section 8 above, arrests for public drunkenness are down in the County, although
we do not have evidence that would attribute this change to the immigration policy.
Taken together, our results indicate that the implementation of the County’s immigration enforcement policy did have significant effects on some of the neighborhood problems that had been of concern to activist groups and to members of the Board when they framed the policy. However, some of the effects (such as the effect on loitering at day labor sites) proved to be temporary and others (such as the effect on overcrowding) were apparent in some parts of the County but not in others. The aging of the housing stock and the severe economic changes that occurred in 2007 and 2008 probably worked to worsen some neighborhood conditions at the same time that the action on illegal immigration may have been having positive effects. Concurrent with the policy’s implementation was a series of improvements and innovations in the Neighborhood Services Division that leave the County far better equipped than it was earlier in the decade to work with neighborhood groups to identify and correct problems in property code enforcement and to handle the increased, continuing caseload.
10 The Policy’s Impact on Community Relations with the Police

In this section, we consider how the immigration policy has affected citizen satisfaction with police and other aspects of police-community relations, particularly as they pertain to relations between PWCPD and PWC’s immigrant community. These results are directly relevant to the policy goal of maintaining the Police Department’s reputation for professionalism and maintaining community confidence and trust in the police. As discussed earlier in this report, the issue of police-community relations has greatly concerned PWCPD’s leadership since the outset of the immigration debate in PWC. We reported in section 5 above on police-community relations in PWC based on two sources: 1) our survey of PWCPD officers in the fall of 2008 and in fall of 2009; and 2) interviews and focus group discussions with officers, supervisors, detectives, commanders, and human resource specialists in PWCPD. In this section, we examine trends in citizen satisfaction with police as measured in annual surveys of PWC residents (the most recent of which was conducted in August of 2010). We also report on the results of semi-structured interviews we conducted, which can tell us the extent to which residents understand the current immigration policy of the County.

The opinions of police officers about community relations are certainly informative, but we have access to much more direct evidence of any changes in community attitudes toward the police by examining the results of the annual Citizen Surveys that the University of Virginia Center for Survey Research has conducted for the County since 1993. These are large, high quality, comprehensive surveys of citizen satisfaction with a broad variety of services. The surveys are conducted by telephone, using random-digit dial sampling and, starting in 2008, also including samples of cell-phone users. (For an account of the survey methods, see Appendix H.) These surveys have long included questions about citizen satisfaction with the police, satisfaction with police attitudes toward citizens, and perceptions of public safety. In 2008, the evaluation team added specific items to the survey that would be relevant to this evaluation. The survey questionnaire does not inquire about any respondent’s citizenship or immigration status, so we cannot identify immigrants or illegal immigrants in our results. We do, however, ask respondents about their race and whether or not they consider themselves to be of Hispanic origin. Thus, we can identify the opinions of Hispanic residents and those of African-Americans, but not those of immigrants.

It should be noted that earlier surveys contained a limited number of Hispanic respondents (less than 40 per year), and it was not until the 2000 year survey that their percentage started to increase. Using the unweighted data, Figure 10-1 presents the percentage Hispanic by year. This pattern reflects the population trend reported in the 2009 Brookings report and in section 7 of this report, as well as variability due to sampling. Two changes in method also affected the representation of Hispanics in the survey series: our introduction of Spanish language interviewing in 2006, and the inclusion of cell phone users in the sample starting with the 2008 survey. (Hispanics are more likely than others to be cell-phone only users.) In the time-series graphs below that compare views of Hispanics to those of other groups, we will exclude the survey results from years prior to 2000 because the small number of Hispanic respondents renders the results statistically unreliable.
Following the practice of the U.S. Census, our survey interview treats race and ethnicity as separate variables. We first ask respondents a yes/no question about whether they consider themselves to be Hispanic. All respondents are then asked to identify their race, and Hispanic is not listed as a race, since (according to Census definitions), Hispanics can be of any race. It is quite common for those who identify themselves as Hispanic to classify themselves as ‘other’ on the race question, while other Hispanics identify themselves as white, black, etc. Thus, the ‘other’ category on our race question is primarily constituted of Hispanics who think of that term as a racial category. For that reason, results for Hispanics and those who choose ‘other’ on the race question are often very similar.

As in previous years, the 2008-2010 Prince William County Citizen Surveys asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with various county public safety services. These included police performance, police attitudes and behaviors toward citizens, efforts to reduce illegal use of drugs and gangs’ activities, fire department performance, and rescue service performance. New questions were added to the series in 2008 about the police implementation of the immigration resolution, the fairness of the police, and the types of crimes residents are victims of in the county.135

10.1 Overall Satisfaction with the Police

In our 2008 survey, taken after the policy was put into effect, the vast majority of residents, 89 percent, said they were satisfied with the overall performance of the Police Department. However, that rating was lower than the ratings reported in the previous five years, and the drop in ratings was statistically significant. In 2008, overall satisfaction with the police was strongly related to the race or ethnicity of the respondent. For contrast, in 2005 when overall satisfaction was 94 percent, blacks were 91 percent satisfied and Hispanics the most satisfied at 97 percent, with all others at 94 percent. In 2008, the rating for whites is virtually unchanged, but satisfaction among blacks had dipped to 84 percent and Hispanic satisfaction with the Police had decreased to 73 percent (see Figure 10-2).

135 The results of the crime victimization and reporting questions are reported in section 8.5.
In contrast, the 2010 survey results show that the gap between Hispanics and whites has narrowed down to a statistically insignificant 3-point difference. In general, the racial and ethnic groups are more similar in their satisfaction with the police in 2010 than they were in 2008.

Figure 10-4 shows overall performance ratings of the Police Department by race/ethnicity over the years, starting with the year 2000. In this graph (and the similar graphs in following sections), a simpler grouping by race and ethnicity is used. Survey respondents are divided into just three mutually exclusive groups: Hispanics, non-Hispanic blacks, and all others. The graph shows that ratings of the police by “All Others” (that is, Anglo whites, Asians, plus a small number from less numerous races) are very consistent over the years. In contrast, the ratings by Hispanics started to drop as early as 2007; at the time of our 2007 survey, local debate about immigration issues was
increasing in prominence, but the County Board had not yet considered the immigration resolution. In 2008, after the policy was adopted and implementation had already begun, satisfaction ratings by Hispanics and by non-Hispanic blacks show a sharp and significant decrease. In 2009, blacks’ satisfaction with police once again matched those of the majority group, only to fall back a little in 2010. Hispanic satisfaction rose to 85.5 percent in 2009, a partial but statistically significant recovery from the 2008 level of satisfaction. By the time of our August 2010 survey, the percent of Hispanics satisfied with police nearly matched the “all others” rating of 93.5%. (Again, the “all others” group includes both non-Hispanic and whites and Asians, who are listed separately in Figure 10-3). With the 2010 results, Prince William County returned to showing survey results in which there is no statistically significant difference between Hispanics and non-Hispanics in their overall satisfaction with the services of the police.

Figure 10-4: Satisfaction with Overall Performance of the Police by Race/Ethnicity and by Year, 2000–2010

10.2 Satisfaction with police implementation of the immigration policy

In regards to the immigration resolution, respondents were asked the following question:

The Prince William County Board of County Supervisors recently ordered the Department of Police to be more active in checking the citizenship or immigration status of people, to see if they are in violation of federal immigration law. How satisfied are you with the job the Police Department is doing in carrying out this policy? Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

The percent expressing satisfaction with the police department’s efforts in carrying out the policy was 80.5 percent in 2008, the first year of the policy’s implementation. That percentage went up significantly in the 2009 survey, to 85.0 percent. However, in 2010 the percent satisfied dropped

136 Satisfaction of blacks may be slightly different from satisfaction from non-Hispanic blacks, as the latter group is a subset of the former group.
137 Our survey does not ask residents directly whether or not they support the County’s immigration policy, but on this question respondents could decline to rate the performance of the police if they were in opposition to the policy.
below the 2008 level, to 76.0 percent of all our respondents. That is, of those who offer a rating in 2010, three out of four respondents said they were satisfied with the job the Police Department is doing in carrying out the policy, with about 2 out of 5 (43.3%) saying that they were “very satisfied” (Figure 10-5). Not accounted for in these satisfaction ratings are those respondents (4.3%) who, because of their opposition to the policy, declined to rate it and those respondents who did not know about the policy or felt unable to rate these police activities (26.7%). The percent declining to rate it due to their opposition to the policy was lower in 2010 than it was in 2008 (changing from 7.7% in 2008 to 4.3% in 2010).

Figure 10-5: Satisfaction with the Job the Police Department is Doing in Carrying Out the Immigration Policy, 2010 (n=915)

Respondents who reported that they were very satisfied or very dissatisfied with the job the Police Department is doing in carrying out the policy were asked a follow-up question about the reasons for their satisfaction or dissatisfaction. This question was asked in an open-ended format and each respondent could provide more than one answer. Respondents’ verbatim responses were coded for analysis.

Table 10-1 presents the grouped responses for those respondents in 2010 who said they were very satisfied (n=412). Of these respondents, 394 responded to the open-ended question. About one third (32.8%) had favorable comments on police actions, and 35 percent had positive comments on the policy itself. Nearly a third (31.6%) cited favorable results of police enforcement of the policy. About one-sixth (14.3%) of those who were satisfied had (negative) comments on the problem of illegal immigration, stressing its disadvantageous aspects. These results are fairly similar to those obtained in 2008, which are detailed in our Interim Report, and those of 2009, which are reported in our separate report on the 2009 citizen survey.
Table 10-1. Reasons for Satisfaction with the Job the Police Department is Doing in Carrying out this Policy (2010, n=394)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>% of respondents mentioning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent said s/he was satisfied with the job the Police Department is doing because...</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal immigration causes problems in the community</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The policy is good/needed</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The policy’s enforcement is having positive results</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police have been doing a good job of carrying out the policy.</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haven't experienced, no opinion, other reasons, answers cannot be coded</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>394</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some respondent answers were coded into more than one category of response. The “Responses” column indicates the number of responses coded for each response category. The column “percentage of respondents mentioning” presents the number of people with responses in each category as a percentage of the number of respondents (394). On average, each respondent’s answer was coded into 1.17 responses.

Table 10-2 presents the 125 responses from those 2010 respondents who said they were very dissatisfied with the job the Police Department is doing in carrying out the policy. By asking for their reason for being dissatisfied, we are able to distinguish between those who would like to see stronger action against illegal immigration, and those who object to the policy or object to the actions being taken by police under the current policy. In the first group, only 1.5% of dissatisfied respondents in 2010 felt that the policy does not go far enough; this contrasts sharply with the 25.9% of dissatisfied respondents who voiced this opinion when we first asked this question in 2008. It thus appears that the effectiveness of the policy is no longer widely questioned by residents who wanted stricter enforcement on illegal immigration. Nearly a third (31.0%) of the very dissatisfied respondents felt the policy was not being vigorously enough enforced by the police. Turning to those who oppose the policy or its enforcement practice, about a quarter of the very dissatisfied respondents (27.7%) had unfavorable comments about the Prince William County policy in general. (In 2008, this percentage was substantially larger, 48.2 percent.) About one in twelve (8.5%) indicated unfavorable outcomes or negative effects from the policy or from police enforcement in general. Only one in five (20.7%) of the very dissatisfied respondents mentioned the actions of the police among their reasons for being dissatisfied. Note that all of these percentages pertain only to the very dissatisfied respondents; the respondents who, for example, mentioned racial profiling or discrimination by the police are just 23 out of 1,402 respondents who were asked about the policy’s enforcement. It is apparent from the open-ended follow-ups that the question elicited responses based as much on residents’ orientations to the immigration controversy and feelings about the County’s new policy than on actual assessment of the Police Department’s performance as executor of the policy.
Table 10-2. Reasons for Dissatisfaction with the Job the Police Department is Doing in Carrying out this Policy (2010, n=113)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>% of respondents mentioning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondent said s/he was dissatisfied with the job the Police Department is doing because...</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal immigration causes problems in the community and the policy does not adequately address them</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The policy is bad</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The results of enforcing the policy are negative</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approves of policy but problems with enforcement exist</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police are discriminatory/racial profiling</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haven't experienced, no opinion, other reasons, answers cannot be coded</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some respondent answers were coded into more than one category of response. The “Responses” column indicates the number of responses coded for each response category; there were 101 coded responses in all. The column “percentage of respondents mentioning” presents the number of people with responses in each category as a percentage of the number of respondents (85). On average, each respondent’s answer was coded into 1.19 responses.

Satisfaction with the job the Police Department is doing in carrying out the immigration policy was far lower among Hispanic respondents (34.2%) than among non-Hispanic respondents (84.4%) (see Figure 10-6). This is a more extreme ethnic contrast in views than was seen in the more general question about overall police satisfaction. Further analysis shows that opinions of Hispanics interviewed in English were more favorable about immigration enforcement than those of Hispanics interviewed in Spanish; more on this issue below.

Figure 10-6. Satisfaction with the Job the Police Department is Doing in Carrying Out the Policy by Race/Ethnicity, 2010
10.3 Satisfaction with attitudes and behaviors of the police

Residents were also asked as in previous years about their satisfaction with police attitudes and behaviors toward citizens. In 2008, this question was asked in a split ballot format with one-third of the respondents answering the question with the word *citizens* and the remaining two-thirds answering the question with the word *residents*. In that year, slightly more than three-quarters (79.3%) of respondents expressed satisfaction with the traditional question (using the word *citizens*), while 78.4 percent expressed satisfaction with the new wording (using the word *residents*). Using the rating of 79.3 percent for comparative purposes, the analysis showed that satisfaction with police attitudes and behaviors towards citizens in 2008 was significantly lower than previous ratings experienced since 2003. Since there was no significant difference based on the change in question wording, in 2009 and 2010 the old wording was discarded and all respondents were asked about attitudes and behaviors toward “residents.”

In 2008, race of the respondent was related to opinions about police attitudes and behaviors. In 2008, the data showed that respondents of “other races” and Hispanics were least satisfied with the attitudes and behaviors of the police, a significant change from previous years. For example, in 2004, blacks were most satisfied at 87 percent, and, in 2005, Hispanics were most satisfied at 91 percent. These figures changed significantly in 2008, with 73 percent of blacks and only 54 percent of Hispanics reporting that they were satisfied with police attitudes and behaviors.

The ethnic and racial gap in satisfaction with these aspects of police conduct lessened somewhat by 2010 but was still statistically significant. (see Figure 10-7). In 2010, 76.3 percent of Hispanics were satisfied with police attitudes and behaviors, compared to 86.4 percent of non-Hispanics. Black and Hispanic respondents had very similar levels of dissatisfaction, and each group was less satisfied than whites.

**Figure 10-7. Satisfaction with Police Attitude and Behaviors by Race/Ethnicity, 2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percent Satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10-8 shows the satisfaction ratings with police attitudes and behaviors towards citizens by race/ethnicity and by year. From 200 to 2007, the gap in satisfaction between Hispanics and “all others” was not very large and in some years Hispanic satisfaction was the same as for the other non-blacks. After implementation of the policy in 2008, satisfaction went down for members of all races.

---

138 In prior years, the question referred to “citizens,” which was meant to be understood as a synonym for “resident.” In light of the immigration policy, CSR decided to clarify the question’s wording by using the term “resident.” The split ballot was used to determine if the wording change would affect responses.

139 Analysis of these ratings shows no significant differences between the two wordings of the question.
three race/ethnicity categories, but especially so for Hispanics, who fell (as noted previously) to 54 percent satisfied. Hispanic satisfaction rose substantially after 2008, to 68.1 percent in 2009 and then to 76.3 percent in 2010. The ethnic gap in perceptions of police attitudes was thus substantially alleviated, but a significant gap remained in 2010 on this question.

**Figure 10-8. Satisfaction with Police Attitudes and Behaviors towards Citizens by Race/Ethnicity and by Year, 2000-2010**

---

**10.4 Satisfaction with police fairness**

In another survey question added in 2008, respondents were asked to rate how satisfied they were that the Police Department treats everyone fairly regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or national origin. In 2010, nearly eight out of ten respondents (79.9%) of respondents expressed their satisfaction, with 48.6% percent saying that they were very satisfied (Figure 10-9). This level of satisfaction and the 78.8 percent recorded in 2009 were both significantly higher than the 74.3 percent who were satisfied in 2008, immediately after the policy’s implementation.

**Figure 10-9. Satisfaction that the Police Department Treats Everyone Fairly Regardless of Race, Gender, Ethnicity, or National Origin, 2010**

---
As illustrated in Figure 10-10, in 2010 blacks (72.8%) and respondents of “other” races (58.9%)\(^{140}\) were less likely to be satisfied than whites (85.0%) and Asians (83.4%). Hispanics in 2010 (55.7%) were also less likely to be satisfied than non-Hispanics (84.1%); this was not a large increase from the very low satisfaction with fairness that Hispanics reported in 2008, when their percent satisfied was just under half (49.4%).

**Figure 10-10. Satisfaction that the Police Department Treats Everyone Fairly Regardless of Race, Gender, Ethnicity, or National Origin by Race/Ethnicity, 2010**

![Bar chart showing satisfaction levels by race/ethnicity.]

140 As explained above, most of the “others” are those who identified their race as Hispanic, which is not considered a racial category in this survey.
This quantitative result was corroborated by our qualitative research in 2010. When we conducted intensive, semi-structured interviews with Hispanic residents, some were interviewed in Spanish and others in English. We noted a similar contrast in attitudes and in knowledge between these groups. Spanish-speaking Hispanics were much more likely to express fear and misunderstanding about the policy than English speakers. At the same time they described cordial and respectful relations with the police and did not express antagonism to the police in general. We heard in both our English and Spanish semi-structured community interviews with Hispanics emphatic reports that the local and regional Spanish-language media present a distorted picture of the situation in Prince William County and foster misconceptions about the County’s immigration policy and its police force.

Table 10-3. Hispanic satisfaction with police items, by language of interview, 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010 Items (Hispanics only)</th>
<th>English Interview</th>
<th>Spanish Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall satisfaction with Police</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>93.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Department carrying out immigration policy</td>
<td>58.4</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police attitudes and behaviors</td>
<td>82.3</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Department treats everybody fairly</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A look back across the last four survey years\(^{141}\) shows that the ethnic gap in satisfaction with police, discussed in section 10.1 above, was largely driven by the changing opinions of the Spanish-speakers (see Figure 10-11). Already in 2007, as the controversy of illegal immigration was beginning to become public, there was a large gap between Spanish interviewees and English-speaking Hispanics in overall satisfaction with the police. This gap persisted in 2008, with both groups dropping further in satisfaction. The closing of the ethnic gap on this question is a result of a substantial shift upwards in the satisfaction of the Spanish-speaking population, who rose to a level similar to that of the English-speaking Hispanics in 2009 and 2010.

---

\(^{141}\) We exclude 2006 because the number of Spanish-language interviews in that year was too small for reliable analysis. The number of Spanish interviews increased when CSR began including cell phones in the survey, starting in 2008.
When the two language groups among Hispanic respondents are compared over time with regard to their satisfaction with the job the police are doing in enforcing the illegal immigration enforcement policy, a remarkable pattern emerges (see Figure 10-12). In the first survey conducted after the policy went into effect, the satisfaction of the Spanish interviewees was fully 50 percentage points lower than that of the more acculturated Hispanics whom we were able to interview in English. Just one year later, this perception gap based on language had disappeared. But then, in 2010, the gap re-emerged, and Hispanics whom we interviewed in English also went down in satisfaction. There is no evidence from any source that the Prince William police actually changed their behavior or their actions with regard to the immigration policy in the time between the 2009 and 2010 surveys. Rather, we can understand this shift in opinions about the police actions on the policy to be a result of the strident controversy in national and local media that arose over the proposed Arizona immigration law, passed in late Spring of 2010 and then overturned by a federal court in the summer. At the same time, a tragic motor vehicle accident in Prince William County occurred in August, 2010, right when the 2010 survey was in the field. This accident involved an illegal immigrant, driving under the influence of alcohol, who struck a vehicle in which several Catholic nuns were riding, killing one and critically injuring two others. The accident was front-page news for several days in the metropolitan press. We interpret the dissatisfaction with the policy’s enforcement expressed by Hispanics in summer 2010 to be a result of renewed fears and as sense of vulnerability on their part as renewed cries for a crack-down on illegal immigrants were heard locally and across the country; the less acculturated Hispanics whom we interviewed in Spanish feel are more likely to feel vulnerable and may find their fears to be stoked by expressions of opinion often heard in the Spanish-language media.
The pattern is different when we compare the language groups on their satisfaction with police attitudes and behavior, but the comparison is equally instructive (see Figure 10-1). Satisfaction with police attitudes went down for both the English-speaking Hispanics and those interviewed in Spanish, but the latter group had a much bigger drop in satisfaction, with only 26 percent satisfied among the Spanish interviewees in 2008. After 2008 the two groups become much more similar in their satisfaction levels, but both remain below the satisfaction levels seen for Hispanics in earlier surveys.
Figure 10-13. Hispanic satisfaction with police attitudes, by language group, 2007-2010.

On the question of police fairness to everyone regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, or national origin (not pictured), the language gap is modest, but as with the question about policy implementation it shows those interviewed in Spanish to be less satisfied than other Hispanics in 2008 and 2010, but not in 2009. Strikingly, on specific questions about police performance on two other important community issues, efforts to reduce the use of illegal drugs and efforts to combat gangs, there is no ‘language gap’ at all; in fact, those we interviewed in Spanish were slightly higher in satisfaction on these items than Hispanics interviewed in English, and Hispanics as a group were no less satisfied than non-Hispanic respondents.

Taken together, these results tell us that the opinions of less-acculturated Hispanics about the Prince William Police Department are both volatile and highly focused. On a question that asks specifically about immigration enforcement, those interviewed in Spanish were very dissatisfied in 2010. In the immediate aftermath of the policy’s implementation in 2008, their satisfaction with police attitudes became very low, but their satisfaction rapidly returned to a level similar to other Hispanics in the County. In 2010, Hispanics are as highly satisfied with the police overall as non-Hispanics, and they have been very satisfied with police efforts to combat gangs and illegal drugs all along. Whenever there is a large public outcry against illegal immigration, the fears and vulnerabilities of the less-acculturated Hispanics in the County find expression in concerns about the County’s immigration policy and whether the police will behave fairly toward people like themselves. When the media are generally quiet on the immigration issue, as they were in 2009, these less-acculturated Hispanics are just as satisfied as English-speaking Hispanics. These patterns of change in response to the immigration climate, as expressed in different media channels, can help us to understand how the ethnic gap in satisfaction police arose in 2008, how it was eased, and why ethnic gaps persist in responses to some survey items about the Prince William police and not in others.
10.6 Do community members understand the present immigration enforcement policy?

The annual community survey does not ask respondents whether or not they understand the immigration enforcement policy. However, we did include in our semi-structured interviews with community members a question that asks the respondent to tell us in their own words what the current policy is. Overall, the people with whom we spoke had a relatively poor understanding of the illegal immigration enforcement policy. Of the thirty-six residents with whom we conducted more in-depth “supplemental” interviews (after they had already completed the PWC Citizen Survey interview) only six reported that police could check immigration status only after a person was arrested, such as this respondent:

What is your understanding of the current police immigration enforcement policy?
What do the police have to do?

Like I said, the only thing that I’m aware of really is if they were arrested for anything then they can ask for their status, but they can’t just pull them over. If they see a whole bunch of loiterers they can’t just go up to them and ask for their verification, their ID.

The vast majority of the residents we spoke with—even those who reported that they had followed the issue closely and were fairly well-informed—indicated that they did not fully understand whom the police could check and under what circumstances.

They came to my campus and talked to us….The police department. They came to our campus. It was one of those public meetings. …They still didn't explain it very well. …And again, you know. I said to them, “Don’t you realize now why the county is so scary?” Because they could pull you over for something, then report you, and it turns out they didn’t have probably cause in the first place, but you’ve already been reported.

What is your understanding of the current police immigration enforcement policy?
Firstly, what do the police have to do?

There is where I have to say that I'm not sure. Because they changed it so that it was not as scary, and at that point I noticed that the original law had done its damage anyway, and there weren’t as many policies scaring people away. That is my take on it.

Another resident responded:

Well, check immigration status of an individual. Like I said, they won’t check into the person making the complaint. If a person makes a complaint they won’t check into their citizenship status, but that still affects them greatly, the policy.

What triggers the police to checking someone’s immigration status?

That’s a good question. I don’t know, but I would think that some of it would be stereotyping. English not being their strongest language. Or a nationality.

We also analyzed the transcripts from eighteen semi-structured interviews conducted with community residents who were not part of the sample for the annual CSR community survey. Among those with inaccurate understandings of what the policy was, people’s thoughts varied from those who said they had no real understanding of the policy because they had not followed it to those who
indicated that the police could check the immigration status of people they stopped to those who said that people could only check the immigration status of people they charged with a crime.

Eight out of eighteen participants explicitly stated that they “do not know” what the policy says.

“Actually, ma’am, I don’t know anything about it. I have no idea what the policy says.”

“In all honesty, I don’t want to say anything out of turn, but I don’t know honestly, what the policy is to be honest with you.”

A few of these interviewees seemed loosely familiar with the immigration policy.

“…I know one of them was you have to have a bicycle helmet when you ride bicycles. So I guess that would, more Hispanics would be more of the ones that use that mode of transportation.”

“…all I know is that the police periodically, and I think this is really good, is that they put up road blocks and that they check everybody for licensing; because if you’re not legal then you can’t get a license.”

Others residents have a fuzzy understanding of the policy. These participants could cite the involvement of the police, the importance of probable cause, and the relevance of residents’ immigration status but they did not know the facts about the law.

“Well, as I understand it, the police can stop-- I’m not certain that they have to have a reason to stop people--I believe they do--or a traffic violation or something like that, and they check their immigration status and what happens after that I’m not sure. I assume it gets turned over to the Immigration Service”

“What I understood about the policy was that, if the police stops someone, and the police has reason to believe that person is involved in criminal activities, or other illegal activities such as possession of drugs, then the police can request to see that person’s legal documents.”

Finally, a couple of residents discussed the policy in regard to what happens after an arrest is made. All three mentioned moving from an arrest to deportation.

“It is that if they’re arrested they could be, when they go to jail they can be deported.”

“Well, if the police stop them or arrest them for a certain maybe felonies or whatever, they do have the right to check their background if they’re not a citizen, they can hold them to be deported.”

“Basically, it says if you are committing a crime, the Prince William County police have the ability or the authority to ask you if you’re a legal resident and if you can’t produce document that you’re a legal resident, that’s another crime and they can effect deportation.”

An important fact about the County’s immigration policy is that it was passed and implemented in one form and then modified in mid-2008 to remove the mandate for inquiry under ‘reasonable suspicion’ and instead mandate immigration checks for all persons placed under physical arrest. Participants have little to no knowledge of the changes that were made to the policy in 2008. The majority of the participants in the eighteen community interviews responded that they “did not know” about the change.
“No, ma’am. I don’t even know.”

“I’m not sure.”

“Honestly, I’m not sure if the original policy was changed.”

Four participants were familiar with “a change” to the policy but even they were a little unsure when asked to describe it.

“I’m not very familiar with those changes, although I know that something was changed. I just never looked into it. What I do know is that after the modification, I wasn’t experiencing the same treatment as before. I wasn’t getting pulled over randomly, for example. I also never heard other people complain about this sort of treatment.”

“…there was a lot of issues regarding the policy and then I believe it became very costly for the county to keep up the program. I’m not sure. I guess they maybe backed off the policy a little bit. Not really done away but backed off. That’s the change.”

“I think I’m correct in saying that there wasn’t going to be any racial profiling. That people could gather together in an orderly manner in order to find work. And they had to actually do something wrong to be arrested and detained by the police.”

In summary, the County’s policy remains highly misunderstood and confusing to many, despite the efforts of the police to educate the community about it. Many residents—perhaps most—do not have a current or clear understanding of how the law is implemented in Prince William County. We found this misunderstanding to be most acute among Hispanic residents with limited English proficiency. In fact, some of the non-English speakers we interviewed had noticeable, unexpected difficulty comprehending the question itself: for some of the newcomers to the United States the concept of a formal “policy” that actually guides police behavior may be foreign to their thinking.

In some of our later interviews, we showed residents materials from the Police Department that are designed to explain the policy. These include materials from the Department’s webpage and the brochures prepared in 2008 for distribution after the policy was changed. It became clear that these materials could be improved. It is not necessary in 2010 to recount in detail the provisions of the original 2008 policy or the history of its modification, as is done in these brochures. Residents want to know: what will the police do if they stop me tomorrow, what will they not do, and what papers do I need? They need to be reassured that they will not be subject to immigration inquiry if they come forward to report a crime or act as a witness. These reassurances do appear in the current brochures, but are perhaps not given sufficient prominence. We recommend that the Department undertake a re-design of these materials. We also recommend that the Department undertake greater efforts to communicate through the Spanish-language media, to better reach those who are most fearful and uninformed about the policy and the actual practices of the Prince William police. We recognize that the Department has invested great effort in its community outreach and education campaigns around the policy, and we are impressed by the skills we have seen displayed by the bilingual officers in the department. Nevertheless, our survey and interview results show that continued effort will be needed to inform the public about the policy and to maintain and further restore positive relations with the Hispanic community, especially with those who do not speak English well.
10.7 Summary

One of the key goals in implementing the County’s immigration enforcement policy was to maintain the Police Department’s reputation for professionalism and maintain community confidence and trust in the police. The data from our annual community surveys reveal that the introduction of the policy in 2007-2008 seriously disrupted police-community relations in the County, at least temporarily. We are fortunate in having at our disposal survey data from years preceding the policy’s introduction. These data show that Hispanics in the County were generally satisfied with the police at levels similar to non-Hispanics. When the policy was introduced and implemented, however, a substantial gap in satisfaction emerged between Hispanics and non-Hispanics in overall satisfaction with the police, satisfaction with the attitudes and behavior of officers, satisfaction with police fairness, and satisfaction with police efforts to enforce the immigration policy itself. The Police Department invested substantial effort in explaining the new policy and attempting to reassure members of the Hispanic community, in a series of several hundred community appearances, many involving the Chief of Police. The Department also used its website, printed brochures, media appearances, and appearances at community fairs to spread its messages. It is likely that the damage to community relations would have been considerably greater, and more permanent, without these efforts. However, they were not sufficient to prevent a palpable chill to fall over police-community relations in 2008, as seen not only in our survey results but in the everyday experiences of police officers, reported to us in the 2008 focus groups and in some of the responses to our surveys of officers.

The good news is that the chilly relations with Hispanics warmed fairly rapidly, resulting in much more positive reports from officers in our 2009 focus groups and our 2009 interviews with key informants. These perceptions were confirmed in our 2009 Citizen Survey, which showed substantial reduction in the satisfaction gap between Hispanics and non-Hispanics. By 2010, Hispanic satisfaction with the overall performance of police equaled the satisfaction of non-Hispanics. On more specific questions about police attitudes and behaviors and about police fairness, a significant ethnic gap in satisfaction remained, but the gap regarding police attitudes had narrowed considerably from what was seen in 2008. While residents in general were quite satisfied with police efforts to enforce the immigration policy, Hispanic residents were much less satisfied in 2008, rose in their satisfaction in 2009, and then went down again in 2010.

Through further analysis of the survey data and our in-depth interviews with some community residents, we found that the group that is most dissatisfied with the immigration policy is those Hispanics who do not speak English well. For a variety of reasons tied to their lack of full acculturation, their presumably closer ties to illegally present persons, and their attentiveness to Spanish-language media that may distort the situation in Prince William County, Hispanics who lack proficiency in English are—in some survey years—far less satisfied than English-speaking Hispanics with particular aspects of police performance that are related to the immigration issue. We interpret the survey results to indicate that this group is particularly vulnerable to the changes in the opinion climate on the immigration issue, as portrayed in the mass media. When the perceived volume of nativist outcry against illegals increases, the vulnerabilities felt by the less-acculturated Hispanics find expression in our surveys through dissatisfaction with the County’s policy and the actions its police take to enforce that policy. Fortunately, these opinions do not seem to diffuse into a more general dissatisfaction with the police, whose efforts to combat drugs and gangs are fully appreciated by Hispanics, including non-English speakers. Again, overall satisfaction with the police was fully restored among Hispanics by 2010, erasing the gap on the general police satisfaction question (but not on some more immigration-relevant police items).
Our qualitative interviews also reveal that many residents, especially Hispanics and even more so the lesser acculturated Hispanics, do not understand the current immigration policy. Many continue to think that the County police can and will stop anyone at any time to ask about their immigration status. They do not understand the changes that were made in the policy in 2008, nor do they understand the implications of those changes. Good police-community relations on this issue will necessarily be based on a correct public understanding of what the current policy is. While the Police Department has devoted great effort already to promoting better understanding of the policy, and our survey results do show substantial progress in repairing the wide ethnic gaps in perceptions of the police that opened up in 2008, it is clear that further and continuing effort will be required to get correct information out to the Hispanic community and to fully restore their confidence in the Prince William County police to the levels maintained before 2007.
11 Effects on the County’s Internal and External Reputation for Inclusiveness

In this section we examine how the County’s immigration enforcement policy affected residents’ views of the County government, of Prince William County as a place where they want to continue to live, and their ratings of their quality of life. These results are directly relevant to the policy goal of maintaining the County’s reputation as an inclusive community, both internally (to its current residents) and externally (to people outside the County). We rely primarily on two sources for this assessment: results of our in-depth interviews with community residents, and results of the annual Prince William County Citizen Survey. Since that survey was fielded in years before, during, and after the policy’s implementation, these data can give us a clear picture of how residents view their community and its government over time, thus revealing key changes in the County’s internal reputation. We do not have any survey data available that can show us how people outside of Prince William view the community. However, we can return to the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data files to see how demand for homes in Prince William changed after the introduction of the policy.

During our in-depth interviews conducted in 2008, we heard repeatedly that the Hispanic population in general was afraid of being stopped by the police as a result of the policy despite the efforts of the Police Department to inform the population that the policy’s intent was to rid Prince William County of serious criminal offenders who were illegal immigrants, not just illegal immigrants in general. We heard that Hispanics did not trust that they would be safe. We also heard from Police Department personnel that they believed people understood the policy and that people were more comfortable with the policy after months of public education forums. These competing statements led us, in our 2009 Interim Report, to investigate responses to three questions that have been part of the Prince William County Citizens Survey for a number of years: the overall quality of life rating that residents give to the County as a place to live; residents’ desire to live in the County “five years from now,” and trust in the County government. With the 2009 and 2010 Citizen Surveys now complete, we can now observe not only how the responses changed when the policy was implemented but consider how these attitudes changed in the succeeding years.

11.1 Resident ratings of quality of life in Prince William County

Each year, the Prince William County Citizen Survey asks a large, random sample of residents to rate Prince William County as a place to live. This is the first substantive question in the interview each year. The question reads:

“Please imagine a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 represents the worst possible community in which to live, and 10 represents the best possible community. Where on that scale would you rate Prince William County as a place to live?”

These ratings have generally been quite high on average, and have not varied greatly over the years. However, when the survey samples are divided by race and ethnicity into the three mutually exclusive groups of Hispanic, non-Hispanic blacks, and “all others” (a category that encompasses Anglo whites, Asians, and small numbers of people from less numerous racial categories), it is clear that immigration issues and the policy affected the way Hispanics rate Prince William as a place to live. As seen in Figure 11-1, the quality-of-life ratings from non-Hispanic blacks and all others remain fairly stable over this ten year period, fluctuating only slightly between 7 and 7.5 on the scale. In contrast, Hispanic ratings increase from 2003 to 2006 (years of rapid growth in the size of the Hispanic community) to a peak score of 8.01, a full point higher than the 7.00 rating that was average for the whites, Asians and others in the “all others” category. The Hispanics’ rating went
down about half a point (to 7.45) in 2007, as issues concerning illegal immigration became prominent in the media and in public discussion in the County. A year later, after the immigration policy had been proposed, debated, passed, implemented, and modified, the rating from Hispanics plummeted to 5.93, while that of the other groups remained stable. We remarked on this ethnic divide in quality of life ratings in our Interim Report.

As Figure 11-1 also shows, however, this gap disappeared completely in just one year’s time. In 2009, average ratings from Hispanics had returned to their 2007 level (7.51). In 2010, amid the renewed national and local debate about illegal immigration, Hispanic ratings dropped a half-point again, to 7.09 (not a statistically significant change). Thus, the County has not returned to the situation of 2006, in which Hispanics were happier with the County as a place to live than other groups, but has moved past the ethnic divide of 2008 to situation in which there is no significant ethnic or racial difference in residents’ ratings of quality of life.

**Figure 11-1. Overall Quality of Life in Prince William County (on a 1-10 point scale, 1 is low), 2000-2010.**

---

### 11.2 Residents’ desire to live in Prince William County in the future

Our annual survey also asks a very simple and direct measure of community attachment:

*Would you like to be living in Prince William County five years from now, or do you hope to be living someplace else by then?*

Until 2008, this was one of the rotating series of questions that is asked only in even-numbered years. However, as part of this evaluation project we changed this question to one that appears annually.

The results for this question over the years (Figure 11-2) are similar in pattern to those of the quality of life ratings, but more dramatic in the differences they reveal. Throughout the period of rapid Hispanic influx, from 2002 through 2006, Hispanics were considerably more likely to want to stay in Prince William than others. In 2006, over three quarters of Hispanic residents (77.3%) wanted to be
living in the County five years hence, compared to 55.8 percent of non-Hispanic blacks and about half (52.8%) of all others. Two years later, after implementation of the policy, the picture had changed dramatically: in 2008 only 42.8% of Hispanics wanted to stay, while the percentages rose for non-Hispanic blacks (60.9%) and all others (63.1%). It is hard to imagine clearer evidence that the implementation of the policy caused a major change in how Hispanics perceived their place in the life of the community.

As was seen in the quality of life ratings, the large ethnic gap in the desire to stay in the County proved to be temporary. In 2009, the percentage of Hispanics wishing to stay had bounced back to 64.1 percent, identical to the 64.0 percent of “all others” who wanted to remain. The differences between the groups were not significant in 2010, either. Thus, the wide ethnic gap in community attachment that was created by the policy controversy in 2008 disappeared in a year’s time, but the situation was altered from the pre-policy years, when Hispanics were the group most wanting to stay in the County in the future.

**Figure 11-2. Percentage of Respondents Who Would Like to Live in PWC 5 Years from Now, 2002-2010.**

11.3 Residents’ trust in County government.

For many years the Prince William County Citizen Survey has included a question about trust in the local government, patterned after the wording of government-trust questions used in many national surveys. We ask:

*How much of the time do you think you can trust the County government to do what is right – just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time*
Figure 11-3 examines survey participants’ trust that the government will do what is right always or most of the time, over the last eleven years. The time series shows that the non-Hispanic whites, Asians and others we have grouped in the “all others” category are quite steady in their level of trust in the County government, with all years scoring trust percentages between 62 and 65 percent, with the exception of 2005, when only 60.2 percent were trusting. The pattern for Hispanics is quite different. Their trust level is similar to that of others for most years from 2000 to 2007, except in 2004 and 2005 when Hispanic trust reached 73.8 percent in each year. All groups were similarly trusting in 2007 (61 to 66 percent). But after implementation of the immigration policy Hispanic trust levels dipped to just 50.3 percent, contrasting sharply with the 63.1 percent trust level reported by the “all others” group. Interestingly, African-American residents of the County also dropped sharply in their level of trust, reaching an all-time low of only 44.8 percent trusting the government to do what’s right all or most of the time. While we expected a decrease in Hispanics trust in government, we did not necessarily expect to see such a large decrease for blacks, but there were indications in our interviews that some blacks believed that they might also be vulnerable to police action, because they too are a minority in the community. In general, African Americans traditionally exhibit lower levels of trust in government than whites. What has been striking in Prince William County is that while African Americans have shown slightly lower levels of trust than other racial/ethnic groups, the differences had not been large until 2008. The policy, therefore, appears to have negatively affected people’s trust in government in two large demographic groups. So again, we have evidence of an important ethnic divide in views of the local government that emerged in the aftermath of the policy controversy in late 2007 and 2008.

In 2009, African-Americans had regained their trust in government (62.3% trusting), but it is taking longer for the County government to recapture the trust of Hispanic residents. Trust levels for Hispanics were 53.6 percent in 2009 and 59.5 percent in 2010, compared to 66.4% for the Anglo whites and Asians in the “all others” category. For reasons we have not been able to discover, black trust in government went down again in 2010, dipping to 51.9 percent. It is fair to say that the immigration policy opened up an ethnic gap in government trust in 2008, and that the task of regaining the trust of minority groups in the County government is not yet complete as of 2010.

**Figure 11-3. Trust that the Government Will do What is Right (Always & Most of the Time), 2000-2010.**
11.4 How were perceptions of Prince William affected, outside the County itself?

We do not have any survey data available that can show us how people outside Prince William County feel about the County or its government. We have heard some of our informants express concern that outside firms might not choose to locate in Prince William because they would perceive the County to be unwelcoming of diversity, but we have no way of knowing if such perceptions are widespread or if they have affected any recent relocation decisions. We have not performed any systematic content analysis of media coverage of the controversy in the County, but the *Washington Post* expressed strong editorial opposition to the immigration policy, and having closely followed its news and feature coverage of the policy in 2007 and 2009 we can say that the coverage tended to stress its negative consequences and the views of the policy’s opponents. The Spanish language press was highly critical of the County; local papers in Northern Virginia were more mixed. The documentary film *9500 Liberty* became popular on the Internet as a Youtube series, was then aired at a series of fundraisers and forums for progressive political activists, and was ultimately screened on MTV in 2010. The film does not paint a positive picture of some of the County notables who supported the original policy, and it depicts quite vividly some of the uglier expressions of nativist sentiment that emerged during the course of the public debates on-line and at public meetings. We feel confident in stating that, overall, Prince William’s actions on the illegal immigration issue have received far more bad press than good up until now.

The data discussed earlier in this section show that views of the County were negatively affected among Hispanics for the most part, and not so much among non-Hispanics. Again, we do not have interview or survey data for Hispanics outside of the County. However, the data files from the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act may provide some insight to how attitudes about the County might translate into a very concrete action: applying for a mortgage loan to purchase a home in Prince William. Home ownership is a good indicator of whether individuals plan on settling in a community over the long term, and data derived from the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act gives a sense of this by charting mortgage applications by race and ethnicity. A review of owner-occupied home purchase loans to Hispanics living in Prince William County, Manassas City, and Manassas Park City from 2000 to 2007 shows a sharply rising trend up to 2006 and then a steep drop-off. In 2000, on average, Hispanics accounted for 8.2 percent of loan applications for owner-occupied 1 to 4 family homes and manufactured homes. This figure had doubled to 17.2 percent in 2003 and more than quadrupled to 39.9 percent by 2006 but fell to only 19.4 percent in 2007. Trends in Manassas Park City and Manassas (Figure 11-4) are even more telling because these urban areas house a higher concentration of Hispanics, but saw a steeper post-2006 drop than did Prince William County. Where Hispanics applied for 21.55 percent of home loans in Manassas City in 2000, by 2006 this rate had risen to 72.8 percent, but in 2007 the rate dropped to 34.2 percent. In Manassas Park City, the rate rose from 31.8 percent in 2000 to 60.9 percent in 2006 and then fell to 40.45 in 2007. Data on home construction in the county display the same trends, peaking at 12,000 permits issued in 2005 and then declining to only approximately 2,000 in 2009. Foreclosures are the reverse side of

---

142 The available HMDA data give us, for each census tract, the percentage of loan applications that were from Hispanics and the number of loan applications per 1,000 housing units. We added in to this data set the tract level counts of occupied housing units from Census 2000. This allowed us to estimate the number of mortgage applications in each year (based on the 2000 count of housing units) and hence the number of applications by Hispanics. Once the counts were estimated by tract, they could be totaled across the county or city to give overall percentages applied for by Hispanics.

143 “Average,” here, refers to the median.

144 This pattern held true for all construction in the county.
The home ownership dream, and data show that the foreclosure rate for homes in the county is highly concentrated in neighborhoods where the Hispanic population is densest\textsuperscript{145} — a fact that we also observed in tours through these neighborhoods. We assume that most of the former residents of these foreclosed properties have left the county.

\textbf{Figure 11-4. Percent of owner-occupied home purchase loans to Hispanics for 1 to 4 family dwellings and manufactured homes: PWC, Manassas City, and Manassas Park City}

The dramatic decrease in demand for home purchases by Hispanics is evident in maps we created, based on the HMDA data for both the County and the adjacent cities. These show, for each census tract, the percentage of home loan applications that were from Hispanics. A comparison of figures Figure 11-5 and Figure 11-6 shows how the wave of Hispanic demand for housing in the County suddenly receded in 2007. In the areas of most concentrated Hispanic settlement, the majority of loans applications were still from Hispanics, but in the rest of the County the percentages of applications from Hispanics went down sharply. (Absolute numbers of loan applications were down in all locations, but Hispanic applications dropped more sharply than non-Hispanic applications.)

Figure 11-5. Percent Hispanic home purchase loans, PWC + cities, 2006

Legend
- Zip Codes in Prince William
- VA counties

Census tracts
Percent Hispanic Loans (2006)
- 0% - 25%
- 25.1% - 37%
- 37.1% - 66.7%
- 66.8% - 100%
Figure 11-6. Percent Hispanic home purchase loans, PWC + Cities, 2007

Figure 11-7 shows the percent Hispanic for the County combined with Manassas and Manassas Park. These data offer a window on how Prince William and the adjacent small cities, taken together, are viewed by Hispanics outside the County.
Figure 11-7. Percent of home loan applications from Hispanics in Prince William, Manassas and Manassas Park, 2000-2007

From 2000 until 2006, the percentage of Hispanic home mortgage applications in the County and the adjacent cities increased every year. The percentage went up from 11.6 percent in 2000 to a peak of 41.1 percent in 2006. In 2007, however, only 18.7 percent of home mortgage applications in the County region were from Hispanics, a drop to less than half their percentage in 2006. Of course, this change happened at the same time as the onset of the mortgage crisis that swept through the County and the nation, so the overall number of home loans was lower in 2007 than in 2006. It is certainly true that the mortgage crisis had differential impacts on different ethnic and economic groups, so that Hispanics would have more difficult time accessing home loan credit than non-Hispanics. Nevertheless, we think the drastic drop in Hispanic demand for homes in the Prince William area in 2007 was at least in part a product of a new perception that the County was no longer a welcoming place for Hispanics. Further research using later waves of HMDA data, and comparisons to other parts of the metro area, would be able to shed more light on how much of this drop-off in demand reflects economics and how much is a change in the choices Hispanics are making about where to live.

If Hispanic demand for homes in Prince William County were to increase again, one would expect to see a corresponding, renewed increase in the Hispanic population of the County. However, a glance back at Figure 7-1, which tracks the overall Hispanic population changes in the County compared to the rest of the metropolitan area through 2009, suggests that many Hispanics were still avoiding Prince William when choosing a place to live, since growth of the Hispanic population leveled off in Prince William while growing apace in the balance of the metro area.

11.5 Summary

The County’s adoption of its immigration policy in 2007 and its implementation in 2008 had a strong, immediate impact on the way Hispanic residents perceived their life in the County, their desire to continue to live in the County, and their trust in the County government. On several of these indicators, Hispanics had been more positive than non-Hispanics prior to 2006. In each of these indicators, dramatic and unprecedented ethnic gaps emerged in 2008 that separate the views of Hispanics from those of non-Hispanics, whose views of the County were generally unaffected by
the immigration controversy. (The trust of African-Americans in local government was also disrupted by the change.) In the two years that followed, these ethnic gaps were largely repaired, disappearing entirely for quality of life ratings and desire to continue living in the County. The ethnic gap in government trust lingers on in 2010, but is not as wide as in 2008.

We have no direct opinion data on how Hispanics outside Prince William view the County, but data on Hispanic population trends in the metropolitan region as well as mortgage data from the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act show that Hispanics are avoiding Prince William County in favor of moving to other parts of the region, where their numbers continued to increase after 2006, while the Hispanic population growth of Prince William leveled off. The negative coverage of the immigration policy that was prominent in the regional press, and especially in Spanish-language media, was probably not helpful to the County in maintaining a reputation across the metropolitan region as a welcoming place for Hispanics.

Thus, the County did not initially succeed in its goal of implementing the immigration enforcement policy without damaging its reputation as an inclusive community. For Hispanic residents within the County, ratings of quality of life and desire to continue living in the County rose sufficiently by 2010 to match the sentiments of non-Hispanic residents. Although trust in government for Hispanics continues to lag somewhat, we can say that the County had by 2010 achieved a measure of success in restoring its internal reputation as a welcoming place for Hispanics—that is, its reputation among Hispanics who live in Prince William. However, the data on Hispanic growth outside Prince William—and little Hispanic growth within Prince William—suggest that there is much work to do if more Hispanics outside the County are to be convinced that they will be welcome in Prince William.
12 Conclusions

The preceding sections of this report have briefly recounted the history and identified the goals of Prince William County’s illegal immigration enforcement policy, and presented evidence from a wide range of sources that allow us to reach some conclusions about the County’s success or lack of success in attaining each of these goals. We have also considered whether various unintended negative consequences ensued from the introduction of the policy, and whether or not substantial obstacles to the policy’s success emerged. We can now review these results to draw overall conclusions about the policy’s success. We think the evidence is clear that the Prince William Immigration policy was smoothly implemented by the Prince William County Police Department and County staff; that the policy had wide-ranging effects, some of which were those intended; and that it also fell short of achieving some of its goals.

12.1 The implementation experience

The Prince William County Police Department undertook thorough measures to prepare internally for the implementation of the policy and to educate the community about the policy. Implementation of the policy has generally gone smoothly. The Department benefited from strong, experienced leadership that maintained continuity throughout the study period, with clear and strong emphasis from the top and down through the ranks that the policy would be implemented with professionalism and that racial profiling would not be tolerated. Senior staff devoted great effort to their community-outreach initiatives. Officers have been comfortable implementing the policy, particularly in its current form. They feel themselves to be well trained to deal with illegal immigration issues, and the policy does not seem to have had a major impact on the daily work of patrol officers or shift supervisors. The Criminal Alien Unit, for its part, has played a modest but important role in the Department’s immigration enforcement efforts, focusing on proactive investigation of more serious offenders in coordination with ICE. Staff at the Adult Detention Center, who are not under the authority of PWCP’s Board of County Supervisors and who entered into the 287g program separately, have been trained as 287g officers and have been able to handle the steps and workload of checking the immigration status of detainees. The recent expansion of the ADC has made it easier for the jail to accommodate the increased number of detainees, with less need for costly “farm-outs” of the detainees. By the time our study ended in 2010, the immigration enforcement policy, procedures, and reporting requirements had been well integrated into the normal training and operations of the PWCPD and the ADC. Although the policy has placed additional burdens and costs on both PWCPD and the ADC, and especially on the police command staff, both agencies seem to have adapted well to these demands.

12.2 Reducing the number of illegal immigrants in the county.

Our data show clearly that Prince William County’s immigration enforcement policy resulted in some important changes in the community. While Prince William County accounted for most of the growth in the metropolitan area’s Hispanic population from 2000 to 2006, after the policy’s introduction in late 2007 and early 2008 nearly all Hispanic growth in the metro area occurred outside of Prince William. The number of non-citizens in the County (which includes both those legally and illegally present in the U.S.) decreased substantially. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, police records, and other sources clearly indicate a decrease in the number of illegal immigrants, as shown by a variety of proxy measures that all point in the same direction. (These data are corroborated by reports of our key informants.) We estimate that the number of illegal immigrants in the County decreased by an amount between 2,000 and 6,000 persons from 2006 to 2008, depending on one’s assumptions about the percentage of departing
non-citizens who are illegal. Although we cannot determine how many left because of the policy or because of the economy, and we are sure that both contributed to the declines in the immigrant population, the fact remains that the declines seen in Prince William’s non-citizen and non-acculturated Hispanics were not nearly matched by changes elsewhere in the metropolitan area. The County’s immigration policy must have played a role here, whether by itself or in conjunction with the severe economic changes that hit the County (and the rest of the metro area) at the same time. Fewer immigrants and fewer Hispanics are moving to Prince William County, although this again is probably attributable to the same range of causes. The overall result was a sudden leveling off (from 2007 onward) of what had been rampant Hispanic population growth in the County, a decrease of several thousand in the number of illegal immigrants, and a restructuring of the Hispanic population as unattached young adults (mostly male) left and were replaced by Hispanic married couples, somewhat older adults, and families with small children, all more likely to be English speakers.

12.3 Improving public safety and reducing crime.

Our conclusions about the policy’s impact on crime must be cautious, due in large part to the lack of historical, pre-policy data on crimes committed by illegal immigrants. Our investigation of data from several sources suggests that the immigration enforcement policy has not affected most forms of crime in PWC. Overall, illegal immigrants currently make up a relatively small proportion of arrestees for serious crimes, and a substantial majority of arrested illegal immigrants are charged with traffic offenses or misdemeanors, particularly public drunkenness, driving without a license, and DUI, which together account for 70 percent of their arrests. Given the lack of pre-policy data on arrests of illegal immigrants, we cannot determine whether or not those proportions have changed since the policy’s implementation.

Our analysis of trends over several years in both offense reports and calls for police service indicates that most types of serious and minor crime did not decline (or increase) following the policy’s announcement in July 2007 or its implementation in March 2008. However, our analyses also show that PWC experienced a substantial reduction in violent crime, driven by a drop in aggravated assaults, following the announcement of the policy and the implementation of immigration checks by the local jail (ADC) in July 2007. This decline coincided very closely with the announcement of the policy, which makes it less likely that the drop was precipitated by factors like the County’s economic trends or other PWCPD crime-reduction initiatives. Further, while several jurisdictions in the Washington, DC area had reductions in violence in recent years, the decline in aggravated assault in PWC during 2008 and 2009 was greater than that experienced by any other large county or city in Northern Virginia or suburban Maryland, including those doing varying levels of immigration enforcement. The decline in aggravated assault likely reflects a combination of reduced offending, reduced victimization, and possibly reduced crime reporting among illegal immigrants. We cannot say how much of the drop was due to each of these factors, but PWCPD data on the ethnicity of victims and arrestees for aggravated assault tentatively suggest that a decline in victimization and/or reporting account for at least part of the decline. All of this suggests that aggravated assaults in PWC declined in response to the publicity and controversy surrounding the PWC Board of County Supervisors’ announcement of the initial version of the policy, which (until April 2008) required officers to inquire about the immigration status of all lawfully detained persons that they suspected of being illegal immigrants.

There was also a sharp decline in hit-and-run accidents that coincided with the introduction of the policy. We conclude that this change is a direct result of the policy and the departure of illegal immigrants, since illegal immigrants would have obvious incentives to leave the scene of a traffic
accident and the reduction seems less likely to be linked to possible changes in reporting of the incidents.

After 2007 there was also some reduction in arrests for public drunkenness, but we cannot attribute this to the policy because arrests of illegal immigrants for public drunkenness were increasing during this time. Further, our analysis of public order offenses more generally does not show any significant drop associated with the policy’s introduction.

Despite our mixed findings, the current version of the policy, which mandates immigration checks only for arrestees, appears to be a reasonable way of targeting illegal immigrants who commit criminal violations. There is fairly broad agreement on this as a goal for law enforcement.

12.4 Reducing overcrowded housing problems, neighborhood nuisances and public disorder.

Our results indicate that the implementation of the County’s immigration enforcement policy did have significant effects on some of the neighborhood problems that had been of concern to activist groups and to members of the Board when they framed the policy. However, some of the effects proved to be temporary and others were apparent in some parts of the County but not in others. The aging of the housing stock and the severe economic changes that occurred in 2007 and 2008 probably worked to worsen some neighborhood conditions at the same time that the action on illegal immigration may have been having positive effects.

Survey respondents are divided on the severity of neighborhood problems and the degree to which they have improved or worsened. We attribute this partly to differences in where they live, as each of the problems was highly localized.

Prior to the policy’s implementation, there was a significant problem of overcrowded housing in the County, associated with the increasing presence of illegal immigrants but localized in a few areas. There were also several active day labor sites that caused real concern for some residents. We have strong, clear reports from some informants that particular overcrowded houses became vacant or changed to normal occupancy very soon after the policy was passed.

Vacant housing became a major neighborhood issue at around the time the resolution was implemented. This development was primarily a result of the mortgage crisis, but the problem may have been worsened by the flight of some immigrants from the County. Responses to the annual citizen survey, as well as reports of informants, show that the problems with upkeep of vacant properties have lessened significantly in the last year.

There are consistent reports in our qualitative data that loitering at day labor sites went down sharply when the policy was first implemented, but then returned to significant levels of activity at the sites within a year or so. Our direct observation and interviews with police officers in the fall of 2010 verified that the three main day labor sites in the County continue to be quite active, involving scores of primarily Hispanic men each day. New legislation was passed in 2010 to limit the activities of day laborers soliciting for work on public streets, but the day labor problem in the County persists.

There were more complaints and founded violations of overcrowding and related property violations in the areas near Manassas than in the Eastern portion of the County. Perhaps as a result of this, there is evidence that overcrowded housing (or housing that may appear overcrowded to some
residents even if not in violation of code) was reduced in the area around Manassas but did not decrease in the Eastern part of the County.

There was a marked increase in the capabilities of the Neighborhood Services Division to guide and respond to complaints from residents about Property Code Enforcement issues. In the years before, during and after the policy’s implementation the Division expanded its staff, improved its enforcement tools and practices, worked with neighborhood groups to educate them about how to make effective complaints, and benefited from a modification of the County’s occupancy ordinance. As a result, the Division’s caseload of complaints did not recede as the policy was put into effect, but continues at a high level. Prince William County is now far better equipped than it was earlier in the decade to work with neighborhood groups to identify and correct problems in property code enforcement and to handle the increased, continuing caseload.

12.5 Saving money by delivering fewer services to illegal immigrants.

This study did not directly measure the fiscal effects of the provisions in the County’s immigration enforcement policy that call for denial of certain services to illegal immigrants. A study by County staff, mandated by the Board’s July 2007 resolution, found that the list of services that could legally be denied to illegal immigrants was quite short and that list did not include the most costly categories of County services. Most of the more costly services that illegal immigrants can receive through the County are federally funded and therefore cannot, by law, be denied to anyone based on their immigration status. Most notably, education must be provided to all students regardless of legal status, as mandated by the U.S. Supreme Court. The Office of the County Executive informs us that any funding saved by restricting services to illegal immigrants in programs such as homeless intervention was shifted to citizens and legal immigrants. We do not know the amounts of these reallocations of resources, but it is clear that these are not large amounts.

Our results suggest, however, that there may have been some savings for the County if the expenditures after 2007 are compared to what they might have been in the absence of the policy. No one can be certain about population trends that might have occurred without the policy, but we do attribute the leveling off of ESOL enrollments in the County’s schools to the introduction of the policy. The number of ESOL students remained high after 2007 and Federal law mandates that this program be funded to meet the need for it. But it is quite possible that, in the absence of the immigration policy, ESOL enrollments would have continued to climb along with their associated costs.

12.6 Maintaining the Prince William County Police Department’s reputation for professionalism, and maintain community confidence and trust in police.

The data from our annual community surveys reveal that the introduction of the policy in 2007-2008 seriously disrupted police-community relations in the County, at least temporarily. When the policy was introduced and implemented, new and substantial gaps in satisfaction emerged between Hispanics and non-Hispanics in overall satisfaction with the police, satisfaction with the attitudes and behavior of officers, satisfaction with police fairness, and satisfaction with police efforts to enforce the immigration policy itself. As has been noted, the Police Department invested substantial effort in explaining the new policy and attempting to reassure members of the Hispanic community. It is likely that the damage to community relations would have been considerably greater, and more permanent, without these efforts. However, they were not sufficient to prevent a palpable chill to fall over police-community relations in 2008, as seen not only in our survey results but in the
everyday experiences of police officers, reported to us in the 2008 focus groups and in some of the responses to our surveys of officers.

The good news is that the chilly relations with Hispanics warmed fairly rapidly, resulting in much more positive reports from officers in our 2009 focus groups and our 2009 interviews with key informants. These perceptions were confirmed in our 2009 Citizen Survey, which showed substantial reduction in the satisfaction gap between Hispanics and non-Hispanics. By 2010, Hispanic satisfaction with the overall performance of police equaled the satisfaction of non-Hispanics. On more specific questions about police attitudes and behaviors and about police fairness, a significant ethnic gap in satisfaction remained, but the gap regarding police attitudes had narrowed considerably from what was seen in 2008. While residents in general were quite satisfied with police efforts to enforce the immigration policy, Hispanic residents were much less satisfied in 2008, rose in their satisfaction in 2009, and then went down again in 2010.

Through further analysis of the survey data and our in-depth interviews with some community residents, we found that the group that is most dissatisfied with the immigration policy is those Hispanics who do not speak English well. These County residents are far less satisfied than English-speaking Hispanics with particular aspects of police performance that are related to the immigration issue. We interpret the survey results to indicate that this group is particularly vulnerable to the changes in the opinion climate on the immigration issue, as portrayed in the mass media. Fortunately, these opinions do not seem to diffuse into a more general dissatisfaction with the police, whose efforts to combat drugs and gangs are fully appreciated by Hispanics, including non-English speakers. Again, overall satisfaction with the police was fully restored among Hispanics by 2010, erasing the gap on the general police satisfaction question (but not on some more immigration-relevant police items).

Our qualitative interviews also reveal that many residents, especially Hispanics and even more so the less acculturated Hispanics, do not understand the current immigration policy. Further and continuing effort will be required to get correct information out to the Hispanic community and to fully restore their confidence in the Prince William County police to the levels maintained before 2007.

12.7 Maintaining County’s reputation as an inclusive community, both internally (among its current residents) and externally (among people outside the County).

The County’s adoption of its immigration policy in 2007 and its implementation in 2008 had a strong, immediate impact on the way Hispanic residents perceived their life in the County, their desire to continue to live in the County, and their trust in the County government. On several of these indicators, Hispanics had been more positive than non-Hispanics prior to 2006. In each of these, dramatic and unprecedented ethnic gaps emerged in 2008 that separate the views of Hispanics from those of non-Hispanics, whose views of the County were generally unaffected by the immigration controversy. (The trust of African-Americans in local government was also disrupted by the change.) In the two years that followed, these ethnic gaps were largely repaired, disappearing entirely for quality of life ratings and the desire to continue living in the County. The ethnic gap in government trust lingers on in 2010, but is not as wide as in 2008.

We have no direct opinion data on how Hispanics outside Prince William view the County, but data on Hispanic population trends in the metropolitan region as well as mortgage data from the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act show that Hispanics are avoiding Prince William County in favor of moving to other parts of the region. After 2006 the Hispanic population growth of Prince William
leveled off, while the number of Hispanics continued to increase apace in the balance of the metropolitan area. In Prince William, the percentage of home mortgage applications from Hispanics fell sharply in 2007. The negative coverage of the immigration policy that was prominent in the regional press, and especially in Spanish-language media, was probably not helpful to the County in maintaining a reputation across the metropolitan region as a welcoming place for Hispanics.

Thus, the County did not initially succeed in its goal of implementing the immigration enforcement policy without damaging its reputation as an inclusive community. For Hispanic residents within the County, ratings of quality of life and desire to continue living in the County rose sufficiently by 2010 to match the sentiments of non-Hispanic residents. Thus, the County had by 2010 achieved a measure of success in restoring its internal reputation as a welcoming place for Hispanics—that is, its reputation among Hispanics who live in Prince William. However, the data on Hispanic growth outside Prince William—and the relative lack of Hispanic growth within Prince William—suggest that there is much work to do if more Hispanics outside the County are to be convinced that they will be welcome in Prince William.

12.8 Did serious unintended consequences emerge?

In section 3 above, we noted that during the debate over the policy, a number of concerns emerged about possible negative consequences that might ensue if the policy were adopted. Our evaluation has been attentive to each of these concerns.

One concern was that if the policy were put into place that it might facilitate overzealous or inappropriate enforcement actions by police. This concern about police officers “going rogue” was especially relevant to the original policy, which required a check on immigration status if an officer had reasonable suspicion that a person was in the United States illegally. That policy made the immigration check mandatory under circumstances of reasonable suspicion, but officer discretion remains on whom they choose to stop and whom they choose to ignore when a minor offence is observed. In our in-depth interviews and in the comments of respondents in our community surveys, we heard two or three people say that they—or people they knew—had been stopped by the police (or stopped several times) for small traffic offenses, and they were concerned that this was because they appeared to Hispanic. However, there was no such pattern of police behavior that came to the attention of the police department. And when we analyzed the Police Department’s calls for service records, we could detect no upward spike in traffic stops during the time (from March to April 2008) when the original policy was in effect. We have no way of knowing that frivolous police stops never occurred, but we can say with assurance that no detectable pattern of over-enthused immigration enforcement developed among the County’s police officers, and we heard nothing from any quarter about any “rogue cops” abusing their discretion on this issue.

A related concern was that the introduction of the policy would generate a flood of costly litigation against the Police Department and the County government. Again, this concern was more relevant to the original policy than to the amended policy, which was designed to reduce the Department’s vulnerability to allegations of racial profiling. When the initial resolution was first passed, a class action lawsuit was filed against the County seeking to have the law overturned. The suit was thrown out of court. In 2010 a suit was filed, alleging improper use of force by officers who made an arrest at a party, and also raising the possibility that racial profiling was involved in that arrest situation. These allegations were dismissed by the court. Thus, there has been litigation against the County, but hardly the costly flood of lawsuits that some had feared. Again, we note that the amended policy, in effect since July 2008, mandates immigration checks for all arrested persons and does not seem likely to create situations that would potentially involve, or appear to involve, racial profiling.
Another concern that was voiced when the policy was debated was that it would overburden the Police Department to the point of reducing its effectiveness. For example, some worried that police officers would be tied up in lengthy inquiries about immigration status, or that their need for assistance in such inquiries would make impossible demands on the time of their supervisors. We did not hear reports of such problems during the brief time when the original policy was in effect. The current policy shifts the timing of most immigration inquiries from the time of initial detention to the time after arrest. Post-arrest processing already takes an arresting officer off the street for many minutes or even for hours, and the added duty of checking the immigration status of some arrestees has not proven to be an onerous addition to the processing steps already required. There is certainly an additional burden of time on officers from having to perform this new function for every arrest, but there is no indication that departmental effectiveness suffered as a result.

Another possible negative consequence was that the policy might generate administrative costs far greater than anticipated at the time of adoption. Keep in mind that substantial additional training, equipment, community outreach and administrative costs (totaling more than four million dollars) were anticipated and provided for when the policy was adopted, in the form of an increased budget allocation for the Police Department, based on an estimate of expected costs from the Chief of Police. Our report has documented that there were substantial demands on the time of senior staff because of the policy, as well as additional daily demands on patrol officers and their supervisors. These are real costs that will continue to affect the operating and management costs of the PWCPD, and they should be taken into account in future budgets for the department. It does not appear, however, that these costs have proven to be greatly different from the initial estimates by the department.

Another concern about the policy was that it would create fear and a sense of being unwelcome among immigrants in general, and that it might cause legal immigrants, or Hispanics generally, to leave the county. Because it was one of the County’s goals to maintain its reputation as an inclusive place for all, including Hispanic residents, we have dealt extensively with these issues in our evaluation of the policy’s goals above. We have concluded that substantial numbers of illegal immigrants did leave the County, and it reasonable to suppose that some legal immigrants also chose to leave. In fact, a few such departures were described to us by our community informants. On the other hand, the fact that the size of the Hispanic community remained stable as the illegal immigrants departed, and the age structure of the Hispanic community changed significantly after the policy was introduced, both suggest that more acculturated Hispanics remained and/or took the place of the illegal immigrants (and legal immigrants) who did choose to leave.

Finally, a major concern for the police and others was that the introduction of the policy would result in lower crime reporting from the Hispanic community, or even increase their victimization. Some police officers think that reporting has been inhibited, but many others do not. In interpreting the County’s changing crime statistics, we have kept in mind that crime reporting by Hispanics may have been lowered. Our community survey shows no changes in the rate of crime victimization of Hispanics between 2008 and 2010, and the surveys also suggest (based on small sample sizes) that Hispanics who were crime victims were about as likely as non-Hispanics to report the crime to the police. On the other hand, respondents in our in-depth interviews were virtually unanimous in saying that a hypothetical crime victim or crime witness who did not speak English well and was not at U.S. citizen would probably not report the crime to the police. Our overall judgment on this issue is that illegal immigrants are less likely than others to seek contact with the police, but this was surely also the case before the policy was put into effect. While the policy may have made this problem worse, or increased the reluctance of some legally present Hispanics to report, we do not believe this effect is big enough to explain away entirely the reductions we have seen in some types of crime.
We would also expect the under-reporting problem to have become less acute as the attitudes of Hispanics toward the police and the County government returned to their pre-policy levels after hitting their low point in 2008. With all that said, the Police Department should certainly continue efforts to encourage reporting and to spread the word to everyone in the Hispanic community that PWC police will not inquire about the immigration status of persons who come forward as witnesses or call to report a crime.

12.9 Implementation obstacles

Our evaluation was attentive to possible implementation obstacles that might have prevented the policy from achieving its goals. Primary among the possible obstacles were issues of system capacity. We wondered if ICE, the Federal agency responsible for processing illegal aliens who are turned over to their custody, would be able to handle the increased workload. Although there were some problems with ICE’s responsiveness and capacity in the early months of the policy’s implementation, these issues were ironed out and cooperation between PWCPD, the ADC, and ICE has been good. Would the local jail be able to hold the new detainees? In the early months, when the new flow of immigration detainees began and the ADC was still in its old quarters, many detainees had to be sent to detention facilities outside the County. When the ADC moved into its expanded facilities, however, the number of “farm-outs” was decreased. At no time was the activity of the police department on immigration checks curtailed because of capacity problems at the jail. Would there be money to pay for placement of detainees in outside facilities? Because the illegal immigrants were being detained on federal matters, the cost of their detention was picked up by the federal government, so this was not a cost to the County or to the regional jail. Would supervisors in the Police Department be overburdened with supervisory duties in connection with the actions of line officers in processing inquiries into the immigration status of persons encountered in the field? No issues of this kind were mentioned in our interviews, focus groups, or observations of the police.

We also wondered about a different kind of obstacle: the cooperation and capacity of line employees. Would patrol officers understand the legal complexities of the original policy and then its amendment, and would they cooperate fully in carrying out their new duties and the new documentation requirements accompanying the policy’s implementation? For the most part, this was not a problem at all. Officers felt well trained on the policy and seemed to have little difficulty with the new procedures. In 2009, however, it became clear that some officers were not consistently completing the “field interview cards” that are used to report on encounters with illegal immigrants. After intervention by the management team, the backlog of missing reports was cleared and officers understood the need for completing them. This was a minor glitch in what was, overall, a smooth implementation that was never greatly hampered by the obstacles some had been concerned about.

12.10 Some implications and open questions

Our nation has been embroiled for the last several years in an active, highly partisan, often acrimonious debate over what should be done about the problem of illegal immigration. It is inevitable that this assessment of Prince William County’s experience with its illegal immigration enforcement experiment will attract interest from both those who favor stronger action against illegal immigration and those who oppose it. We have concluded that the Prince William immigration policy was smoothly implemented by the Prince William County Police Department and County staff; that the policy had wide-ranging effects, some of which were those intended; and that it also fell short of achieving some of its goals. Since the outcomes of the policy are somewhat mixed, there will be plenty of facts for each side to pick from as they seek support for their arguments about future policies.
Some have argued that local governments are powerless to have an effect on illegal immigration. The reasoning is that the pace and patterns of illegal immigration to the U.S. are governed by the laws, policies, and enforcement practices of the federal government on the one hand, and by large-scale and impersonal economic forces on the other. We have a long and still porous Southern border, and we have had continued strong demand for the types of work that illegal immigrants will do but many natives disdain to do. As long as these conditions hold, the reasoning goes, we must accept that illegal immigrants will be with us. One conclusion is unavoidable from the Prince William experience: this line of reasoning is incomplete. It is quite clear that the decision in Prince William to introduce a more restrictive enforcement policy at the local level had a strong and lasting effect on who chose to live in the County, causing a decrease in the number of illegal residents and significant changes in the composition of the County’s Hispanic population, as well as other effects.

On April 23, 2010, the state of Arizona passed a highly restrictive law (SB1070), aimed at curtailing illegal immigration. A court injunction prevented the most controversial sections of the law from taking effect, and the Federal government intervened with a lawsuit seeking to have the law overturned. It is perhaps inevitable that people will try to compare the Arizona law to the policy in Prince William County. But the current policy in the County is quite different from what has been proposed in Arizona. The Arizona law, with its mandate for immigration checks whenever an officer has probable cause to think a person is illegal, bears a somewhat closer resemblance to the original policy in Prince William, which was in effect for only two months before being substantially amended so that it only mandated immigration checks upon arrest. We doubt that implementation in Prince William would have been so smooth and free of litigation, nor that the confidence of Hispanic residents in the police would have been restored, if the original policy had remained in place. By altering the policy, Prince William County eased many of the fears surrounding passage and implementation of the original law.

While it is important to emphasize that the policy Prince William implemented in July 2008 only mandates immigration checks at the time of arrest and does NOT include a mandate for checks under reasonable suspicion, it is nonetheless true that the original policy did include the latter mandate. The outcry, protests and criticism from opponents of the policy after July 2007 (and until March 2008) were a response to that highly controversial form of the policy. As we have seen, many of the changes that resulted from the policy’s introduction (such as the departure of illegal immigrants from overcrowded houses and the reduction in aggravated assaults) date from that precise period. In general, the changes we have observed in the County do not have a pattern of gradual change that could be attributed to the slow, monthly accrual of arrests and detention of illegal immigrants. Rather, they came fairly suddenly as the newspapers, airwaves and the blogosphere were filled with strident calls for action on the immigration issue along with equally strident warnings of the bad consequences that would result for Hispanics because of possible racial profiling. The irony here is that it may have been the fear inspired by the original proposal that caused the current policy to have some of its effects.

To put this point another way: imagine for a moment that the Prince William County Police Department had quietly secured Board approval to implement the current policy, and, without much comment from the media or citizens groups, had simply started doing immigration checks on all arrested persons. Assume that this would have netted the same monthly number of arrests and detentions of illegal immigrants as actually occurred after July 2008, when the current policy was actually implemented. It is highly doubtful that such actions would have had the large effects that we actually observed in Prince William. It was probably fear that drove illegal immigrants out, and exaggerated fear that may have also driven some legal immigrants to leave, and others to decide not to move to Prince William. It is not clear that the policy would have been as consequential if the
discussion about its adoption had not been so public, acrimonious, and (for Hispanics, some members of other minority groups, and their supporters) fear-inspiring.

The great question that hangs over all our analysis is: What were the effects of the economic downturn, housing collapse, and mortgage crisis that all happened at about the same time as the policy was introduced? We have tried to give careful attention to these economic factors as we have assessed each of the policy’s goals, and we are confident that many of the changes we observed are partly attributable to the economic changes. We have also identified a number of changes, such as the departures of illegal immigrants from the County and the decrease in aggravated assaults, which we judge to have been caused in part by the policy itself. That is, we are sure that economics alone cannot explain all the changes we have identified following the introduction of the policy.

But this leaves open a different question: would the policy have had these effects if the economic factors had been absent? Imagine for a moment that the housing and construction boom had continued unabated through 2010. It is possible that the continued enticements of ready employment and attainable housing in Prince William would have offset any perceived disadvantages from the new police policy and that few illegal immigrants would have changed their choice of where to live. We do not have an answer for this question, and we can only caution that effects that were seen in Prince William from its introduction of the immigration policy might not occur in some other locality if the economic conditions there are less perilous at the time a similar policy is put into effect.

We have mentioned in several places the professionalism and strong leadership that existed in the Prince William County Police Department. These institutional strengths obviously contributed to the relatively smooth implementation of the immigration policy, despite its novelty, difficulty, and controversial nature. We caution that not all local police departments in our nation have these capabilities. In the hands of a less professional and less well-resourced police department, it is not clear that a policy of this kind would have had the same results. Those who would consider implementing a similar policy elsewhere should be clear on the policy’s costs and what it took to implement it competently.

As the federal government continues to experience legislative paralysis on the issue of comprehensive immigration reform, it is very likely that some state and local governments will continue to experiment with various approaches to lessening the negative impacts they may perceive from illegal immigration. Other states and localities will continue to stress the benefits of having immigrants in their midst, and will strive to protect immigrants from any inquiries into their legal status. While some argue that immigration should remain entirely a federal matter, meaning that only the national government should deal with it, the reality of a truly federal system is that governmental powers are distributed across different levels and that policy variation and experimentation across states and localities can be beneficial learning experiences as the nation struggles to find the best solutions to its problems. We have no doubt that the case of Prince William County will be instructive to all those who play a role in creating and implementing America’s immigration policies, whether at the federal, state, or local levels. We close with a gentle admonition that the lessons from Prince William’s experience should be applied with great caution to other places in other times.

The views and interpretations in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of Prince William County’s elected leaders, the County’s Executive Management, the Police Department, or any other unit of County government.
References


