Alternatives to Violence

Beatties Ford | Year 3 Evaluation

URBAN INSTITUTE
REGIONAL DATA TRUST

Image sources: QCity Metro and Charlotte Observer

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Dedication:
To the residents of the Beatties Ford community who continue to define what it means to preserve culture, create change, and maintain community. Their stories and experiences continue to shape our work, our city, and our history.

Image source: https://smartstopselfstorage.com/about -us/our-blog/moving-to-charlotte

Prepared for the City of Charlotte

The City of Charlotte provides services to more than 870,000 residents. The city's priorities are workforce and business development, transportation, planning and the environment, safe communities, and great neighborhoods.

Prepared by the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute

The UNC Charlotte Urban Institute is the Charlotte region's applied research and community outreach center. We seek solutions to the complex social, economic, and environmental challenges facing our communities. We engage expertise across a diverse set of disciplines and life experiences to curate data and conduct actionable research and policy analysis that equips change agents with the information and tools they need to ensure that everyone in our city and region thrives.

Contents

Image source: WFAE 90.7, Elvis Menayese

Executive Summary

Background and Purpose

In 2021, the City of Charlotte contracted with Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP®) – also known as YAP - to implement the Alternatives to Violence (ATV) program in the Beatties Ford Road Corridor. Grounded in the Cure Violence Global (CVG) evidence-based model, ATV aims to reduce community violence through early intervention, a focus on behavior change among high-risk individuals, and mobilization of community norms against violence.

The UNC Charlotte Urban Institute was contracted to evaluate the program's implementation and outcomes during its first year (2022) and examine its cumulative outcomes from Year One (Year 1) to Year Three (Year 3), 2022 and 2024. This evaluation report focuses on outcomes from 2022 to 2024. The evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach, including analysis of crime data, ATV administrative records,
staff interviews, and community surveys.

Key Findings

Program Operations

- **Participation and Engagement**: In Year 3, 21 individuals actively participated in ATV, with 10 new enrollments. Staff made 242 resource referrals and conducted over 5,000 community interactions.
- **Community Support**: Outreach extended beyond program participants, with nearly 3,000 educational materials distributed and 409 referrals made for non-participants.
- **Conflict Mediation**: Staff logged 19 mediations, with most conflicts resolved through de-escalation. Follow-up interventions showed continued engagement.

Social & Behavioral Outcomes

- **Participant Outcomes**: Quantitative data on participant violence were limited. Staff interviews and case notes indicated behavioral improvements, such as avoidance of violent situations, improved academic performance, employment achievements, and positive attitude changes. However, challenges such as participant disengagement and limited resource availability persisted.
- **Community Perceptions**: Staff reported improved community trust in ATV, crediting their relationships, consistency, and trauma-informed and culturally aware approaches.

Community Violence Outcomes

- **Violent Crime Rates**: After an initial rise in violent crime during Year 1, trends began to stabilize or decline by Year 3. Nonfatal gunshot incidents dropped by 63% in Year 3 compared to Year 1. However, only robbery showed a statistically significant decline compared with matched control neighborhoods. Other changes, including reductions in aggravated assault and gun violence, were promising but not statistically significant.
- **Witnessing and Experiencing Violence**: Fewer community members reported witnessing or experiencing violence in Year Three. Self-reported injury due to violence dropped from 22% (Year 1) to 11% (Year 3).

Shifts in Community Norms and Awareness

- **Improved Norms**: Slightly more community members rejected violence as a solution and expressed more confidence in peaceful conflict resolutions in Year 3 compared to Year 1. Similarly, fewer respondents in Year 3 believed guns were necessary for respect, perceived strength, or protection.
- **Decreased Perceived Violence and Increased Feelings of Safety**: Fewer respondents in Year 3 identified various types of violence as prevalent in the community, and fewer felt that violence had increased compared to Year 1 survey participants. However, slightly more participants in Year 1 felt Beatties Ford was a safe place to live.
- **Decreased Awareness of ATV**: Despite continued program activities and outreach, public awareness of the ATV program declined. Only 21% of survey respondents in Year 3 were aware of ATV, down from 34% in Year 1. Fewer had attended ATV events or recognized the program's role in local conflict resolution.

Conclusion

The ATV program in Beatties Ford demonstrates early success in community violence reduction, behavioral improvements among program participants, and community support. While it's not possible to directly link changes in crime rates to the ATV program, qualitative insights and survey responses indicate positive shifts in community safety, perceptions, and participant behavior. Continued investment in visibility and outreach will be valuable to sustain and amplify these positive outcomes.

Introduction

During a Juneteenth celebration in 2020, at least two offenders opened fire into a crowd of around 400 people on Beatties Ford Road (FBI, 2020). The mass shooting, which led to four deaths and multiple injuries, prompted an anti-violence campaign and the implementation of the Alternatives to Violence Program (ATV) by the City of Charlotte.

The ATV program utilizes the Cure Violence Global (CVG) evidence-based model to reduce violence through strategies that aim to detect and interrupt violence before it occurs, identify and change behaviors of those at the highest risk of violence, and mobilize communities to change norms surrounding violence (Cure Violence Global, 2021).

The City of Charlotte contracted the UNC Charlotte Urban Institute (the Institute) in April 2022 to evaluate the program's effectiveness within the Beatties Ford corridor for the first and third years of the program's implementation. To properly assess the impact of ATV, the Institute evaluation team utilized a mixed-methods approach that leveraged administrative data from CVG/ATV, crime incident data from the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD), interviews with ATV staff, and community surveys[1] to answer the following questions:

1. What were the changes in awareness, knowledge, and skills among ATV participants due to their involvement in the ATV program?
2. How has the program participants' behavior changed since engaging with ATV?
3. Have community norms toward violence changed?
4. Have community perceptions of neighborhood safety improved?
5. Have community members become more involved in efforts related to neighborhood safety?
6. Was there a decrease in gun-related and non-gun-related violence in the Beatties Ford corridor?

[1] See the Appendix for a detailed description of the methods used for this evaluation.

Why Beatties Ford?

Established around 1750, the Beatties Ford community became a hub for Black affluence during the urban renewal of the 1960s (City of Charlotte, n.d.; Sparks, 2023). The corridor includes historical landmark neighborhoods where trailblazers like Julius Chambers, Harvey B. Gantt, Sarah Stevenson, and James Ferguson II empowered community members, instilled hope, and shaped the history of Charlotte, earning them the title of "West End legends" (Pitkin, 2021). Beatties Ford is the home of Charlotte's first Black nightclub, which hosted artists such as Sam Cooke and James Brown (CLTure, 2025). It also features Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU), the city's only historically Black college, where civil rights leaders, including Martin Luther King Jr., have spoken (Durham, 2021). Today, the area is a haven for Black-owned businesses and culture.

The Beatties Ford community also illustrates the negative impacts of marginalization and historical discrimination that have contributed to limited investment opportunities for businesses and homeowners, a lack of political-economic support, and, subsequently, slower or absent socioeconomic development compared to the city and the greater Charlotte region. The community faces relatively higher rates of poverty (19%), lower household incomes, and food insecurity– all known social determinants of crime and violence (Chen, Voisin, & Jacobson, 2016; McMahon et al., 2013; Voisin & Neilands, 2010). As such, violent and property crime rates have been comparatively higher in Beatties Ford than the overall rates for the city and county (Mecklenburg County & UNC Charlotte Urban Institute, 2023).

This environment, combined with the uptick in homicides in 2019 and 2020 and the high-profile mass shooting, made Beatties Ford an ideal location for the ATV program (Greenlight 2021).

Image source*The Charlotte Observer,* Khadejeh Nikouyeh

Methods

- Quantitative and qualitative analysis of administrative data from CVG/ATV
- Quantitative analysis of crime rates in Beatties Ford and trends before and after the implementation of the ATV program
- Comparative analysis of crime rates in Beatties Ford to crime rates in similar Charlotte neighborhoods
- Semi-structured interviews with ATV staff in Year 1 and Year 3
- Community survey distributed one year after the implementation of the ATV program (2023) and again in year three of the program (2024). Participants in the Year 1 and Year 3 community surveys were different individuals

See the Appendix for a detailed description of the methods used for this evaluation.

ATV Program

The Operational Structure of ATV

The ATV team comprises trained outreach workers, violence interrupters, a program manager, and a site supervisor who work together to reduce violence and empower community members (Cure Violence Global, 2021).

- Violence Interrupters (VIs) aim to prevent violence by identifying and mediating potentially lethal conflicts in the community. They are locals from Charlotte and work with outreach workers to identify potentially violent situations and disrupt them (Blutkin et al., 2010).
- Outreach Workers (OW) are trained in trauma-informed approaches and work with high-risk community members and their families to identify needs, develop a plan of action, and achieve goals (Cure Violence Global, 2021; Blutkin et al., 2010).
- The Program Manager oversees two of the city's three ATV sites at Beatties Ford Road and West Boulevard, which are overseen by YAP®. The role includes community leadership, ensuring the teams are effectively collaborating with neighborhoods and program participants to deliver positive outcomes, ensuring data is reported accurately, and providing support for the site supervisors and teams.
- The Site Supervisor manages the team and program's functionality by providing support and assistance to staff and their participants.

ATV activities in Beatties Ford extend beyond interrupting violence. They also emphasize "providing resources for…enrolled participants [and] community members in general." This was consistently reflected in staff actions, such as attending community events, volunteering at schools, participating in training like "Stop the Bleed," helping with expenses, distributing food and resources, coordinating anti-violence campaigns, and accompanying participants to recreational activities.

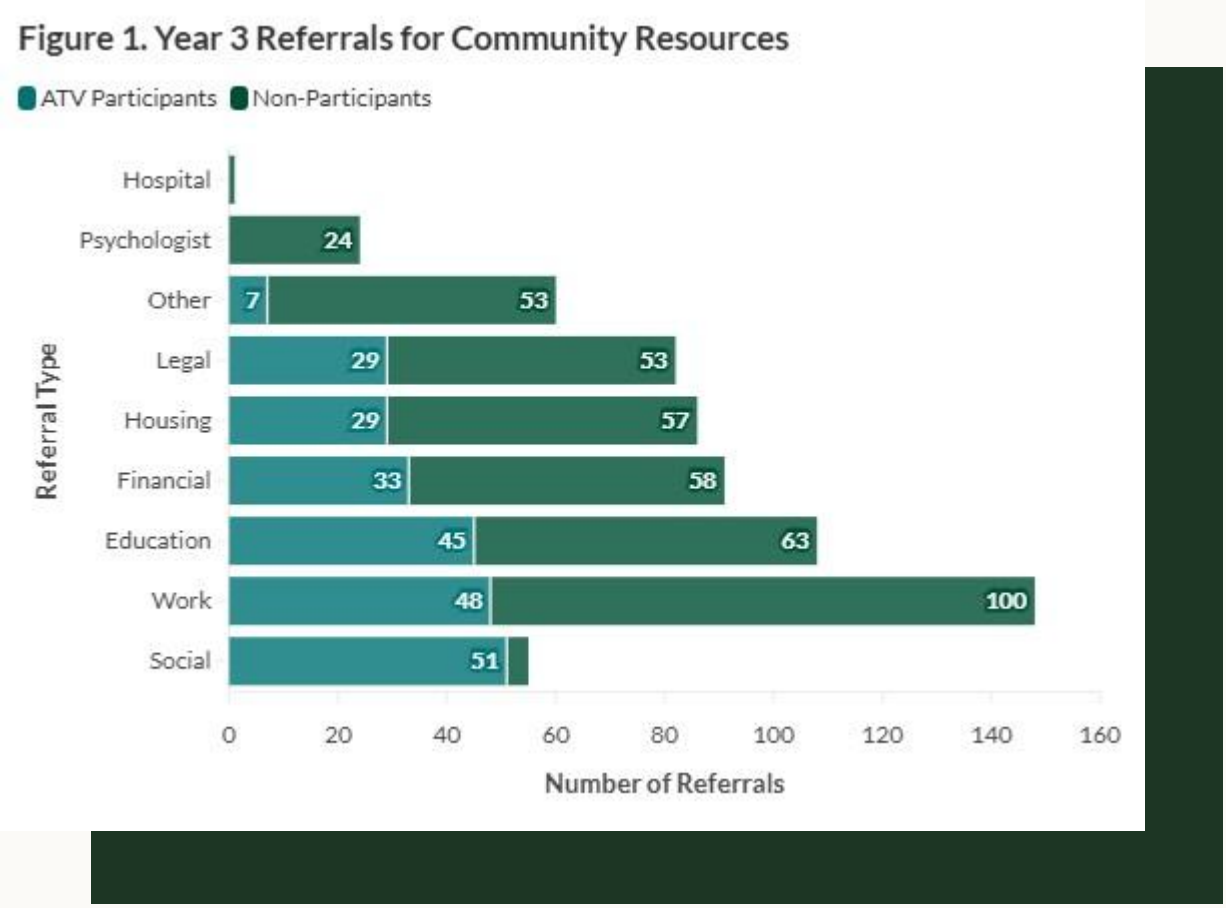
Above all, staff remain committed to meeting participants where they are—providing support and resources that reflect the participants' needs. This includes helping participants improve academic performance and behavior, disengage from violence, and engage in new experiences, such as attending baseball games, advocating at city meetings, visiting museums, and securing employment and housing (source: staff interviews). By focusing on individuals at the highest

risk of engaging in violence, ATV staff work to intervene before violence occurs. This evaluation assesses the effectiveness of the program in the Beatties Ford community.
The Year One report highlighted that effective implementation and fidelity to the CVG model are essential for driving long-term changes in awareness, knowledge, and behavior, both among participants and within the broader community. Evidence of program implementation is recorded and tracked through ATV/CVG administrative data.

Participation and Engagement

According to ATV Participant Case Notes, **10 new participants were added to the program in 2024, totaling 21 active and unique program participants in Year 3.**

A total of **242** referrals were made in Year 3, with social services, work, and education categories accounting for nearly 60% of referrals (Figure 1).



Community Outreach and Support

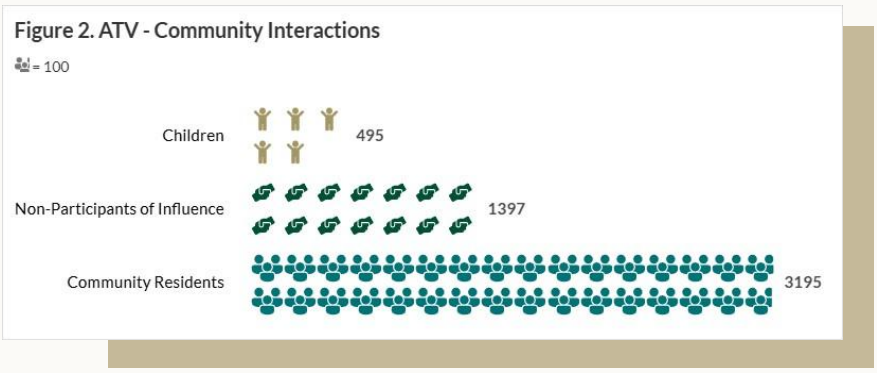
ATV staff engage with the community by attending community events, spreading awareness of ATV, and working with community members who are not participants. Activities include making referrals to community resources, distributing educational materials, and building relationships with key individuals (non-participants who have influence), non-key individuals (community residents who are not participants), and children. These interactions are documented as part of their daily work and take place through individual encounters, event participation, and targeted outreach efforts. **Staff logged over 5,000 community interactions in Year 3**[2] (Figure 2) and distributed approximately 2,900 pieces of public education material. They also made 409 referrals for non-participants, primarily related to employment, housing, and financial services (Figure 1).

Conflict Resolution

Staff help community members and ATV participants apply nonviolent approaches to conflict resolution. ATV data show that staff spent about **33 hours on conflict mediation** and logged **19 conflict mediations** at the Beatties Ford Site between October 2023 and July 2024. An additional **11 hours** were spent on **five conflict follow-ups** during this time.

At the time of initial intervention, 12 conflicts were flagged as resolved, four unresolved, and three had a conditional resolution. At the time of follow-up, five conflicts needed resolution, three were resolved, one was conditional, and one remained unresolved.

At the time of initial intervention, the strategies presented in Table 1 were flagged as most effective for mediating the conflict.



[2] Individual staff members log data. If multiple staff are present at an event, the number of contacts made or materials distributed may be counted multiple times. Consequently, the reported figures may slightly overstate the program's reach.

Table 1: Strategies and Resolutions of Initial Conflict Mediations in the Beatties Ford Area, Year 3

Strategy			Resolved (#)	Unresolved (#)
De-escalating the Situation	7	0 Gathering Information	1	4
Middleman (i.e., neutral party)		1 + 3 (conditional)	0 Reasoning and Providing Non-Violent	
Alternative Solutions	2	0		
Using Program Participants			1	0

The most common strategy was de-escalating the situation, which resulted in a resolution for all cases. The second most common approach was information gathering, although these conflicts required additional follow-up to resolve. Other strategies included the utilization of a "middleman", referring to a neutral party to help de-escalate the conflict, reasoning, and providing non-violent alternative solutions. In one case, program participants were used to deescalate a conflict.

Program Assets

Staff interviews highlighted the benefits of the having staff members—particularly Violence Interrupters (VI)s— who bring lived experience in to their roles that help them build rapport and relate with participants and key informants (i.e., at-risk community members).

> "I'm from around this area. A lot of guys that they call troublemakers– those were my friends. So, I'm really tune with what's going on in the neighborhood because I was one of them."

Knowledge of and familiarity with the area and culture also help staff as they understand and can connect to the community: *"People got different ways of viewing the area. If you're not from here, you're not going to understand."*

Additionally, both Year 1 and Year 3 staff interviewees discussed the ATV team's strong family-like bond and its role in the success of the program. When speaking on the program's advantages, a staff member said, *"I go back to team. Knowing that you got good, genuine people to back you. I think that's very important".* The program's diverse activities were also recognized by staff as beneficial in engaging and building trust with participants.

Program Challenges

During interviews, staff discussed the difficulty in obtaining services for participants due to each organization having specific criteria that must be met and waitlists. For example, a violence interrupter explained, *"You have to go through a process of getting them approved, and there are wait lists."* Although staff understand this process, it is challenging to explain to a person in crisis. *"We can get to some resources but just going through all the red tape to get there. Some situations need emergency attention."*

Despite this challenge, staff work hard to connect people to the resources they need, noting successful connections that have resulted in people receiving food, clothing, rental assistance, and health care services, among others. This was consistent in both Y1 and Y3 interviews and was supported by ATV/CVG administrative documents and data.

Another challenge that the program faces is the retention of participants (i.e., participants sometimes stop contact and/or participation in the program): *"Sometimes even when we're trying to do stuff for them, some of them may disappear, they may hide, they may not answer the phone or telling people they're not here and stuff like that. You know how that go."* Staff members explained that in these situations, they do their best to keep reaching out and may go to family members and friends. They do not "give up" on participants, but they also accept that there is only so much they can do if members do not want their support.

ATV Staff also mentioned that community members can be hesitant or wary of the staff and the program at first. However, similar to their approach to participants, the staff consistently show up in the community and work to build trust, leading to outcomes such as those described in the quote below.

> "They started seeing that we was coming more and giving and getting food and stuff. Now, they start to be like, 'man, we can rock with you all. We see what's going on. You all [are] only here to help'."

Behavioral and Social Outcomes

Participant Awareness and Behavior[3]

A total of 242 referrals were made in Year 3, implying increased participant awareness of available community resources

Case notes highlight participants' progress toward goals such as social well-being, employment, and academic success. Along with referral data, they also indicate that individuals are receiving multiple, tailored referrals over time. This consistent, goaloriented support ensures participants are connected with services that are relevant, accessible, and effective. The approach fosters trust, reduces barriers, and promotes lasting, positive outcomes.

The Institute did not have data on whether participants' incidences of violence were reduced during their time in the program. However, staff interviews and administrative notes imply that some participants take the initiative to reach out and receive support before involving themselves in a violent or hostile situation. One staff member explained, *"Yeah, some of them call and be like, 'Should I do this?"* Or, *"What do you think about this?' And I give my opinion, and sometimes they take my opinion and run with it. And I see the changes."* The staff also noted that they believe these anti-conflict and reflective mindsets contribute to participants' improved behaviors in school and the workplace.

[3] It was our goal to gather data relating to participants' changes in awareness, knowledge, and skills to inform this objective; however, due to the small number of participants in this year's evaluation, the Institute were unable to include these findings in our analysis or speak to the specific research objective. For insights and findings related to participants' overall changes while in the ATV program, please refer to the Year One report.

Positive Impacts

Positive impacts of participating in the ATV program, from the documented success stories provided by ATV staff, included:

- Improved academic performance and behavior
- Graduating with high school diplomas
- Gaining employment opportunities and success in the workplace
- Engaging in new experiences (e.g., sports, entertainment, city council meetings)
- Developing a positive mindset and attitude
- Becoming more self-aware
- Developing prosocial thinking and behaviors
- Adopting a forward-thinking approach that prioritizes the future and long-term ● Receiving ticket dismissals

Community Perceptions

ATV staff believe that one of the program's greatest strengths is its focus on addressing the root causes of violence, moving beyond crisis response to proactive prevention. The structural causes of violence, according to the Vis we interviewed, encompass a lack of basic resources/needs and addiction. Thus, ATV staff work to understand community members' needs and life experiences to address underlying issues that may motivate violence and crime, taking a preventive and more holistic approach to the issue of violence in Beatties Ford.

Staff interviews confirmed that the distribution of resources to the broader community fostered a positive reputation and confidence in the program among community members. While initial community response to ATV staff was marked by hesitation, consistent presence through programming and canvassing gradually shifted perceptions. Staff are now seen as trusted sources of support by many.

Image source: GreenLight Fund

Community Violence Outcomes

A rigorous evaluation of crime rates and trends before and after the implementation of the ATV program is essential to determine whether the violence prevention program achieves its intended effect. The evaluation team analyzed crime data, specifically aggravated assaults, robbery, sexual assault, and homicide, to assess the impact of ATV in the Beatties Ford community. By using statistical methods that match similar groups and measure differences over time, the Institute examines whether observed reductions in crime are statistically significant and plausibly attributable to the program.

Community Violence Outcomes Before and After ATV's Implementation

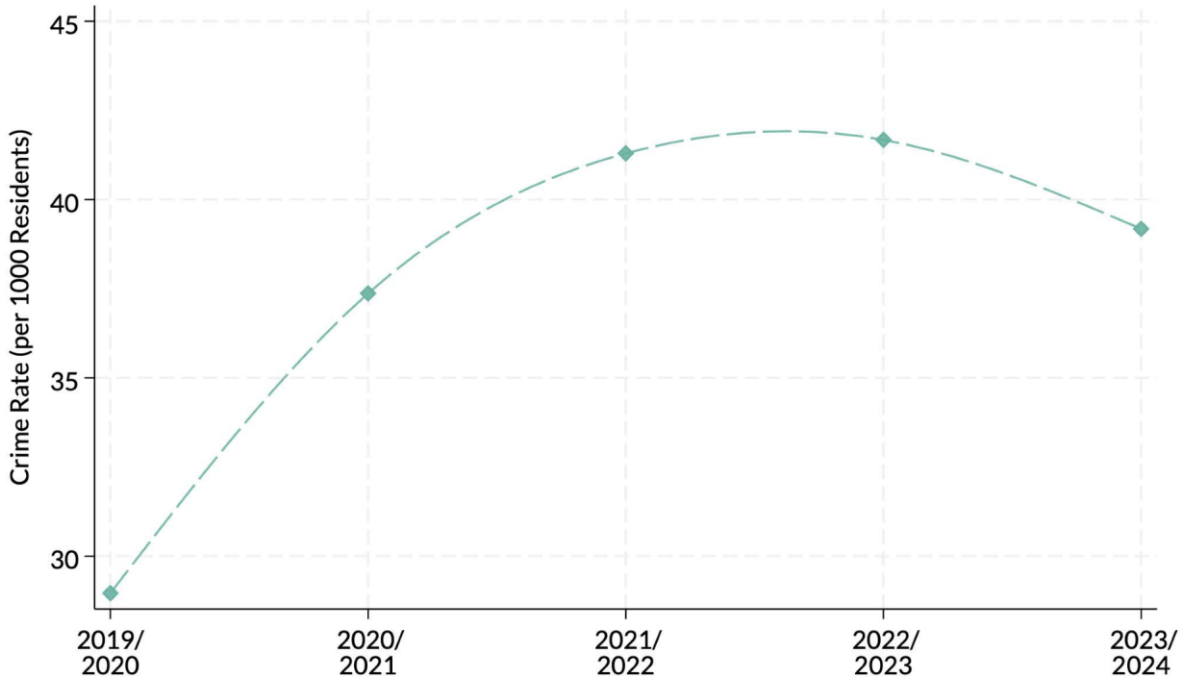
The average crime trends by year in the Beatties Ford neighborhoods between 2019 and 2024[4] were analyzed, and changes over time were highlighted.

Violent Crime

Figure 8 illustrates that violent crime rates in ATV neighborhoods increased from 37 incidents per 1,000 residents to approximately 42 incidents per 1,000 residents during the program's first year (September 2021 to August 2022). It is worth noting that this increase is slower than the change from the year before ATV's implementation, as the violent crime rate increased nearly 30 percent in that period. This overall trend of slowing the growth of violent crime in the first year, stagnating during the second year, and finally decreasing during the third year may suggest a possible delayed influence of the ATV program on violence prevention.

[4] The ATV program was implemented in late August 2021. Therefore, timeframes do not follow the traditional calendar year, beginning on September 1 and ending on August 31. For example, 2019/2020 implies the range of 9/1/2019 through 8/31/2020.

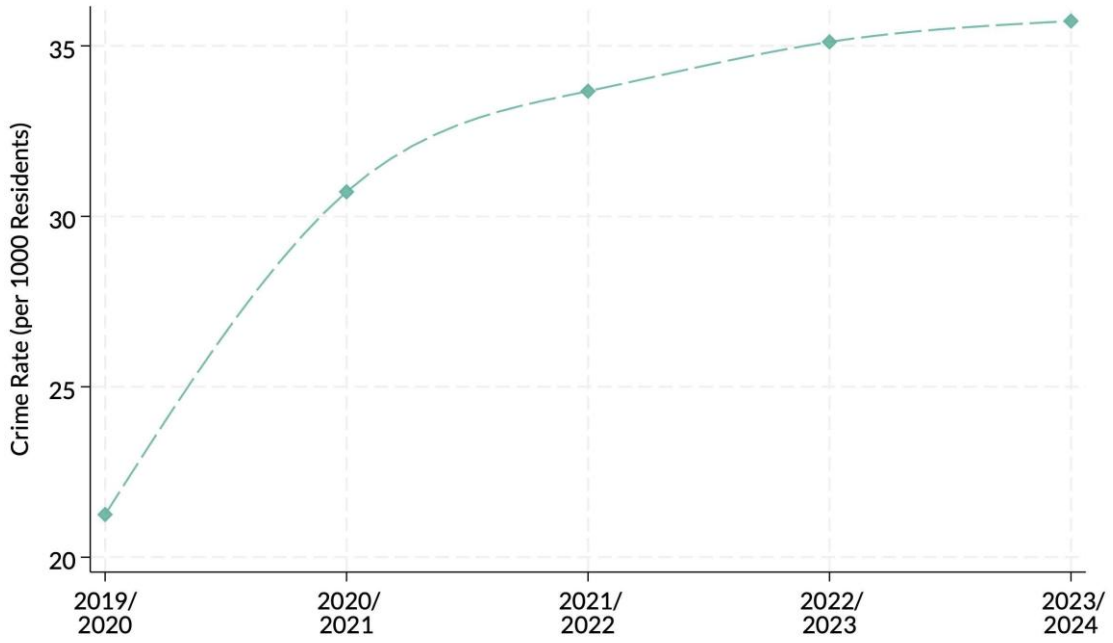
Figure 8: Violent crime rate increased in ATV areas before leveling off in 2022/2023 and then declining in the third year of the program



Aggravated Assault

Rates of aggravated assault (both firearm and non-firearm) show a similar trend (Figure 9). In the year leading up to the implementation of ATV, Beattie's Ford neighborhoods saw an average increase in aggravated assaults by approximately 45%. With just under 31 incidents per 1,000 residents in September 2021 to August 2022, these neighborhoods saw persistent but slower increases of 9%, 4%, and 2%, respectively, in the following years. This slowdown at the beginning of the program's first year could illustrate that the program prevented further escalation rather than reducing crime.

Figure 9: Aggravated assaults increased in ATV areas throughout the program, though the rate of growth slowed after the first year of the program (2021/2022)



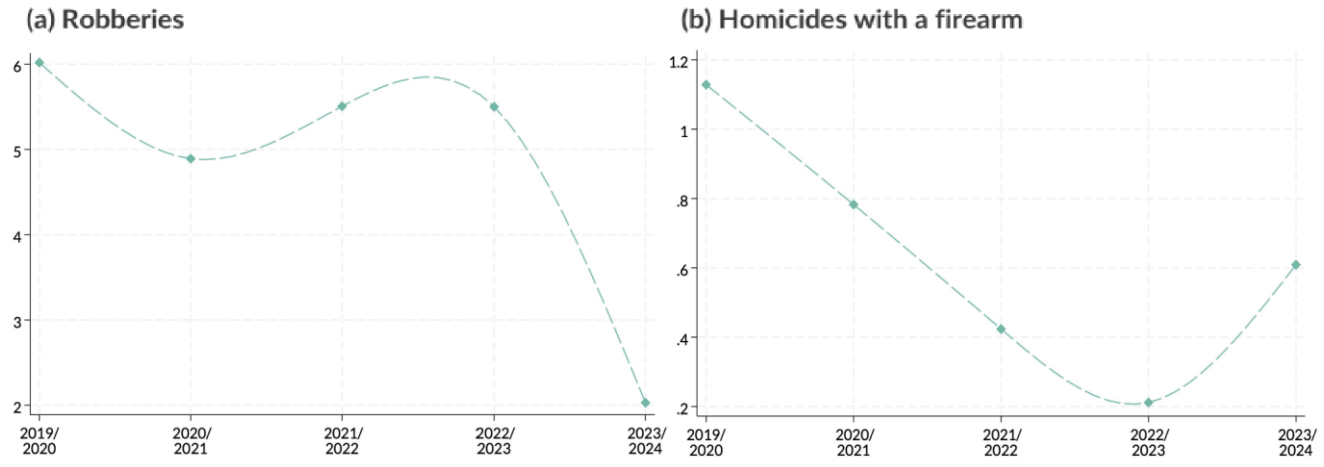
Robberies

Figure 10a illustrates that the rate of robberies were on the decline as the ATV program was implemented. The area saw robberies increase in the program's first year before witnessing a stark downturn in the program's third year, a 63% drop from the 2021 implementation year. This follows some initial observations from Figure 8 in that there could have been a delayed effect of the program for particular forms of violent crime.

Homicide with a Firearm

Shifting our attention to homicide rates with a firearm, the data starts to become more complicated. Figure 10b shows that this type of crime decreased from 1.13 incidents per 1,000 residents in 2019/2020 to 0.21 in 2022/2023, a decrease of 82%. Homicides increased the following year, with the incident rate rising by 190%. While this reversal is surprising given the sudden shift in the overall trend, the crime rate is still 46% below the average that the Beatties Ford neighborhoods saw the year before the beginning of the ATV program.

Figure 10: Robberies plummeted during the third year of the ATV program while homicides increased for the first time during its implementation



Comparing Community Violence Outcomes in Beatties Ford to Representative Neighborhoods

The following section looks at the results from the heterogeneous difference-indifference (hetDiD) models on violent crimes, aggravated assaults, robberies, nonfatal gunshot injuries, and homicide with a firearm rates.[5] The benefit of this DiD model is that it allows researchers to analyze how the effect of the intervention, i.e., the ATV program, may vary over time. Instead of assuming that the impact of ATV is the same for everyone (each neighborhood) and constant over time, this change accounts for the possibility the program may become more (or less) impactful during the three-year review period or that some neighborhoods (even those within the respective groups) may be impacted more than others.

While the models are variations of the ones utilized in the original analysis, they still focus on the impact of the intervention (ATV) on crime rates in the Beatties Ford neighborhoods (treatment group). To measure the impact of this program, the Institute compared these neighborhoods to a set of representative neighborhoods (control group) similar to the Beatties

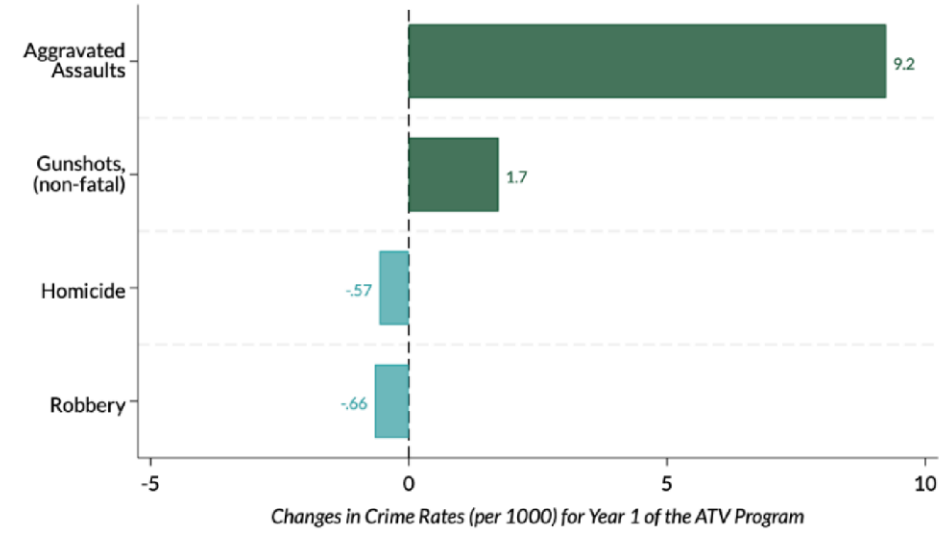
[5] Interested readers can refer to Table A1 in the Appendix to see the coefficients and standard errors for each crime.

Ford area that *did not* receive the program at any point between 2021 and 2024.[6] The hetDiD models allow us to estimate how the crime rates change in ATV neighborhoods each year after the intervention, compared to what would have happened if the intervention had not occurred, using the neighborhood as a point of comparison.

It's important to note that these figures do not represent the total number of incidents, but rather the difference attributed to the program when compared to similar neighborhoods without the intervention. In the program's first year, neighborhoods that received the intervention experienced an average of 9.2 more aggravated assaults per 1,000 residents than comparable neighborhoods without the program (Figure 11). The Institute reports on these predicted differences for aggravated assaults with a firearm, nonfatal gunshots, homicide, and robbery.

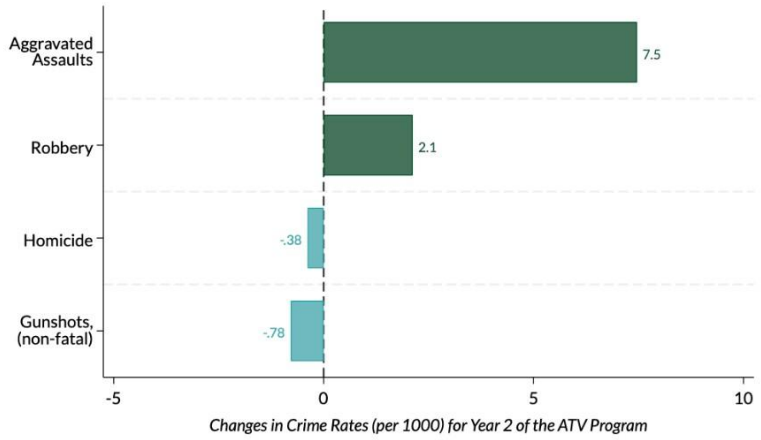
None of these estimates and the following projections outside of robbery during the third year are statistically significant, meaning the data show a real pattern and not just a coincidence. This means that this difference may be due to chance rather than an effect of the program. The Institute therefore urges caution when interpreting any of the predictions discussed below (outside of the change in robberies) as the differences were found to be statistically insignificant.

Figure 11: ATV neighborhoods witnessed higher rates of aggravated assaults and non-fatal gunshots compared to the control neighborhoods in the first year of the program



[6] We eliminated neighborhoods from the West End and Nations Ford as the ATV program eventually started focusing on these areas in addition to the originally Beattie's Ford neighborhoods.

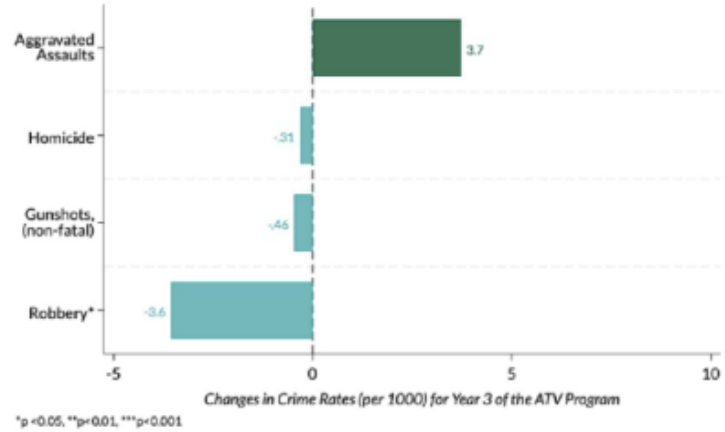
Figure 12: ATV neighborhoods witnessed higher rates of aggravated assaults and robberies compared to the control neighborhoods in the second year of the program, though the difference is lower than in the initial year



Similar to Figure 11, the results in Figure 12 illustrate inconsistencies in how crime rates changed in the ATV and comparison neighborhoods. One of the more interesting findings is the change in nonfatal gunshot rates. While ATV neighborhoods experienced 1.7 more incidents per 1,000 residents compared to control neighborhoods in the first year of the program, the second year saw ATV areas experience .78 fewer incidents per 1000 residents, a swing of 2.48 incidents per 1,000 residents in a single year.

In the third year after the ATV program was introduced, neighborhoods in the Beatties Ford area experienced, on average, 3.6 fewer robberies per 1,000 residents for the year compared to similar neighborhoods that did not receive the program (Figure 13). This result is statistically significant. This indicates reliability that the observed reduction is attributable to the ATV program rather than random variation.

Figure 13: ATV neighborhoods saw fewer robberies, non-fatal gunshots, and homicides per 1,000 residents in the third year



Community Witnessing and Experiencing Violence

From the community surveys, the frequency of witnessing violence was lower in Year 3 than in Year 1 (*p* = 0.033), matching the trends found among the crime data discussed above. A larger proportion of participants in Year 1 stated they witnessed violence *daily* compared to Year 3 (17% versus 9%, respectively). Similarly, a higher percentage in Year 3 (28%) said they never witnessed violence compared with Year 1 (18%).

The majority of respondents in both samples said they had not been physically injured by violence in the last two to three years. Approximately 22% of participants in Year 1 and 11% of respondents in Year 3 experienced physical harm due to violence in Beatties Ford, a statistically significant association (p=0.005). Most had neither friends nor family members recently harmed by violence[7].

[7] The difference in those who had friends or family members injured by physical violence was minimal and not sig. (33% vs. 26%)

Shifts in Community Norms and Awareness

A community survey was developed in collaboration with the Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP®) and the City of Charlotte. The survey was administered one year after the start of the ATV program (hereafter referred to as the Year 1 Survey) and again in year three (hereafter referred to as the Year 3 Survey). The community survey captured information about community members' awareness of the ATV program, their knowledge of and engagement with antiviolence work, and their experiences with local violence. The survey also examined community norms surrounding violence and prevention. A comparative analysis of the survey from Year 1 and Year 3 was used to assess changes in these indicators over time.

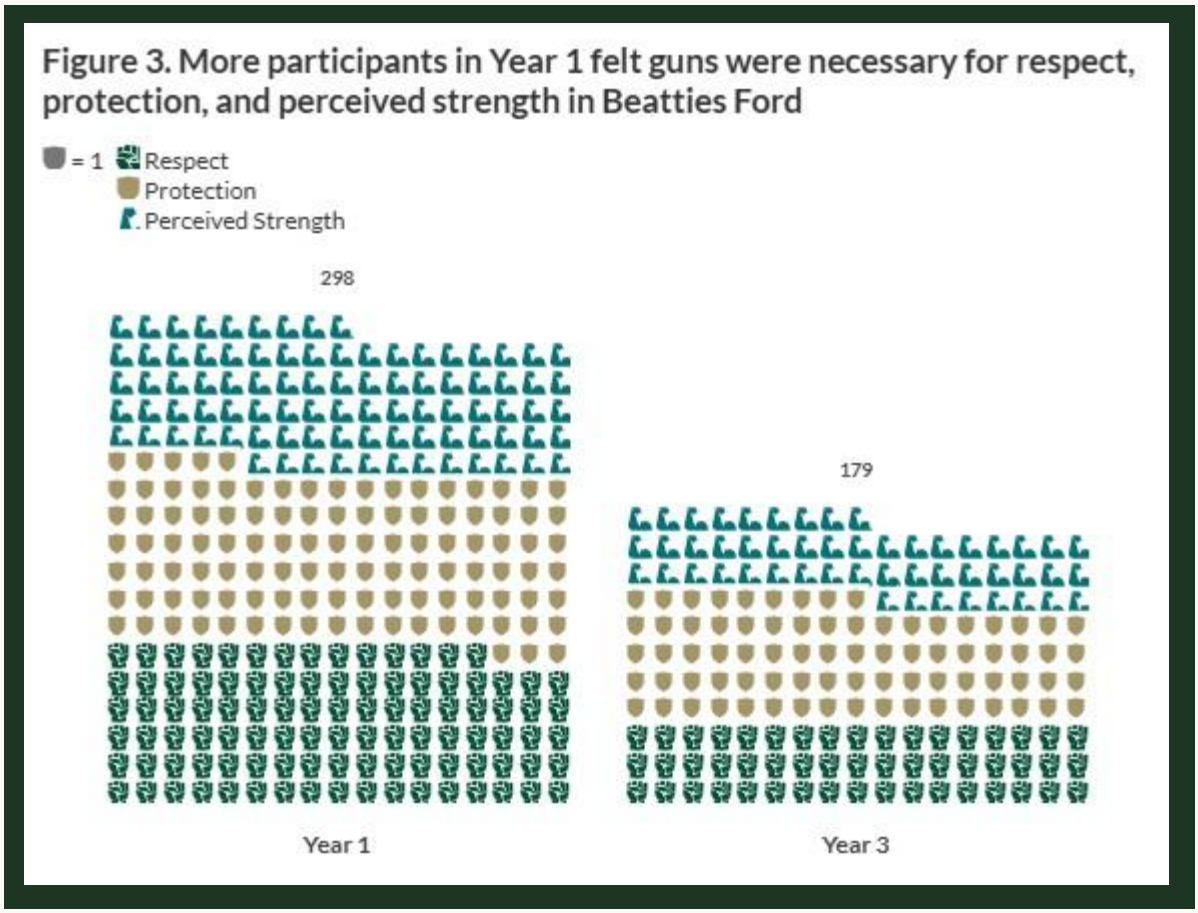
Table D1 in Appendix D provides a detailed summary of the demographics and chi-square results. The distributions of race and ethnicity were similar for both survey years, with the majority of respondents identifying as Black or African American. Slightly over half of the total sample identified as female, and age ranges varied. The Year 1 sample included significantly more adults aged 45 - 64.9 years and more residents who had lived in Beatties Ford for 11+ years compared to Year 3.

Violence Norms

Perceptions of conflict resolution were similar in both survey samples. The majority of respondents *agreed* that talking through a problem is more effective than violence (68% in Year 1 and 73% in Year 3), most conflicts can be resolved without resorting to violence (68%-72% agreed), resolving conflict peacefully is something they are skilled at (63%-66% agreed), and they know how to get their friends or family members to stop fighting or arguing (57%-62% agreed).

Responses were highly variable in both surveys for whether someone is less likely to be targeted when carrying a gun and the need to be seen as someone willing to use violence to keep from being targeted. For both Year 1 and Year 3, the percentage of respondents who agreed with these statements was nearly equal to that of those who disagreed.

Significant differences between the samples' responses were related to guns and gun norms, **where more participants in Year 1 felt guns were necessary for respect (41% versus 25%, p<001), perceived strength (37% versus 24%, *p* = 0.031), and protection (45% versus 35%, *p* = 0.007**) compared to Year 3[8].



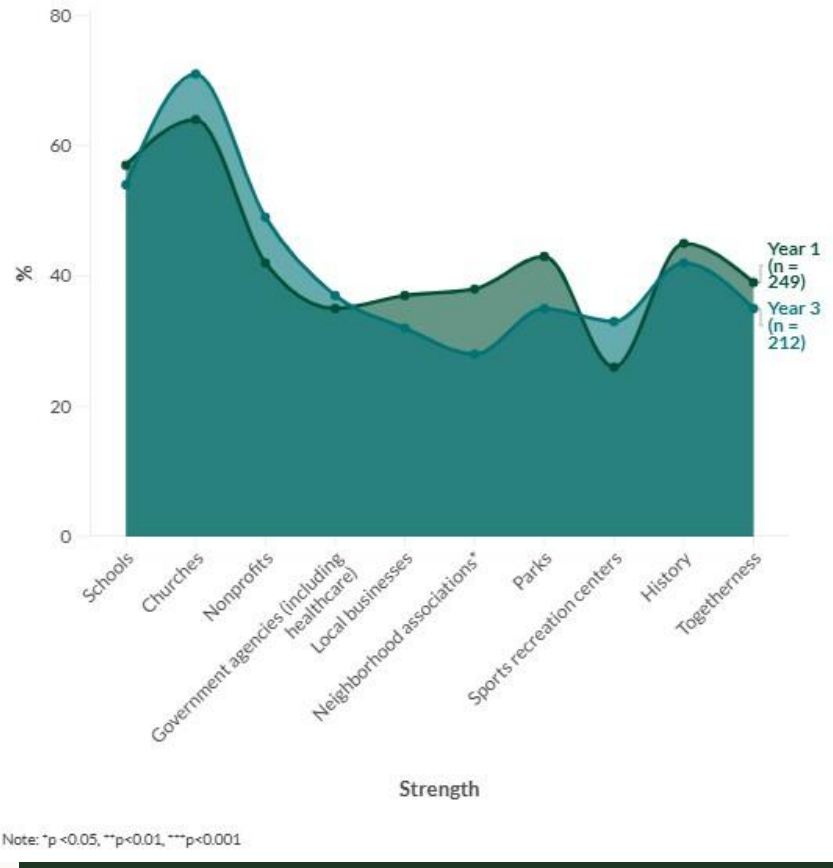
[8] Some of this variation stems from a substantially larger proportion of participants in Year 3 (compared to Year 1) who *neither agreed nor disagreed* with the statements related to guns and worry about violence.

Perceptions of Community Strengths and Challenges

Community members were asked to select from a list of challenges and strengths they believed were prevalent in their Beatties Ford community. **Churches were the most commonly identified strengths in both survey years, followed by schools.** The thirdmost identified strength in Year 1 was history; in Year 3, nonprofits. Strengths mentioned under "other" were related to community and values.

Comparing the surveys, a smaller proportion of participants in Year 3 indicated schools, local businesses, neighborhood associations, parks, history, and togetherness as local strengths compared to Year 1. On the other hand, a larger percentage of participants in Year 3 identified churches, nonprofits, government agencies, including healthcare services, and sports recreation centers as strengths compared to Year 1. Only neighborhood associations were significantly associated with the survey year (p =0.026).

Figure 4. Community strengths identified by survey participants (%)



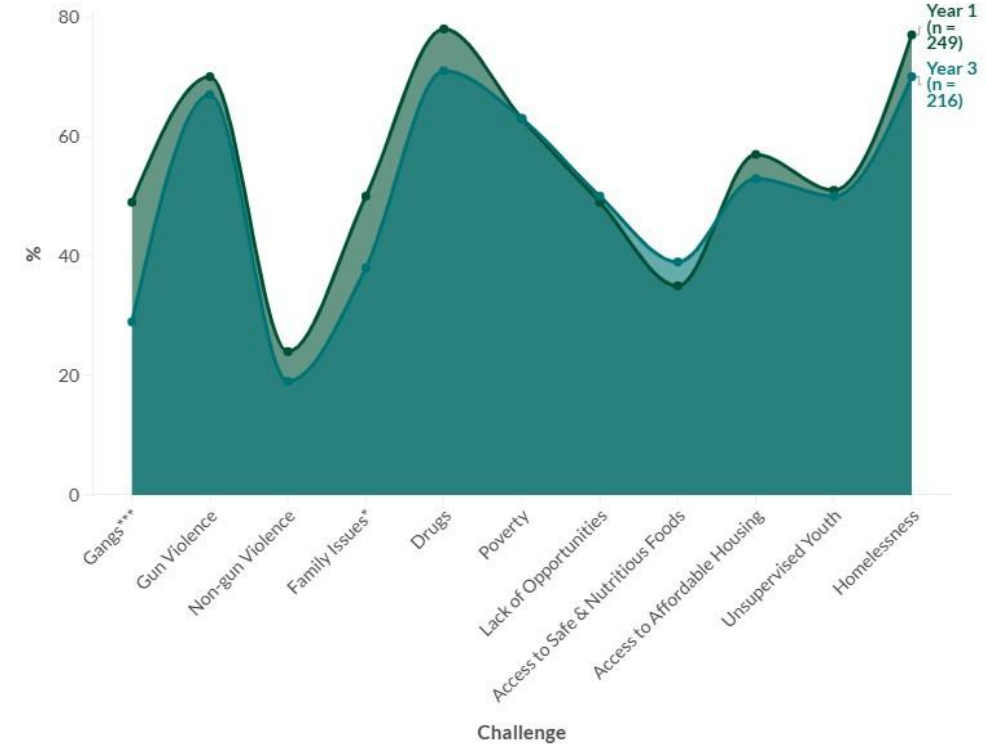
Note: *p <0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

The most commonly identified community challenges in both surveys included drugs, homelessness, and gun violence, with homelessness being noted as the most pressing issue facing their community (in both years) in the openended responses. Challenges identified under the "other" response option were most related to a lack of resources or commentary on violence or crime.

ATV staff members confirmed these as prevalent challenges for the community, in interviews, explaining, *"the challenge is getting people the real help that they need. You got gun violence, you got drugs. That's everywhere."* They contextualized that addiction and homelessness, specifically, as large issues contributing to violence in the community.

Fewer participants from Year 3 than Year 1 identified local challenges. Two exceptions: lack of opportunities and access to safe and nutritious food were identified as local challenges by slightly more participants in Year 3 compared to Year 1, but the difference was not significant. Only gangs and family issues were significantly associated with the survey year, in which fewer participants in Year 3 indicated these as challenges (p <0.001, p = 0.011, respectively).

Figure 5. Challenges identified as prevalent by survey participants (%)



Note: *p <0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Participants were also asked to describe Beatties Ford in a few words. About half of the responses were positive, describing attributes like community, family, culture, and history. However, community members also described negative attitudes toward the community, including descriptives such as “unsafe” or “dangerous,” “violent” and underresourced. A subtheme of change was also noted and was most linked to positive changes such as improvements, growth, and progress. The interviews with ATV staff highlighted similar contrasting perspectives. Conversely, staff discussed assets: *“The businesses that's growing because of the area is growing. And you have a Black-owned bank, you got Black-owned coffee shops," and “it’s a nice area because of the schools… you got stores to where you’re in walking distance*.”

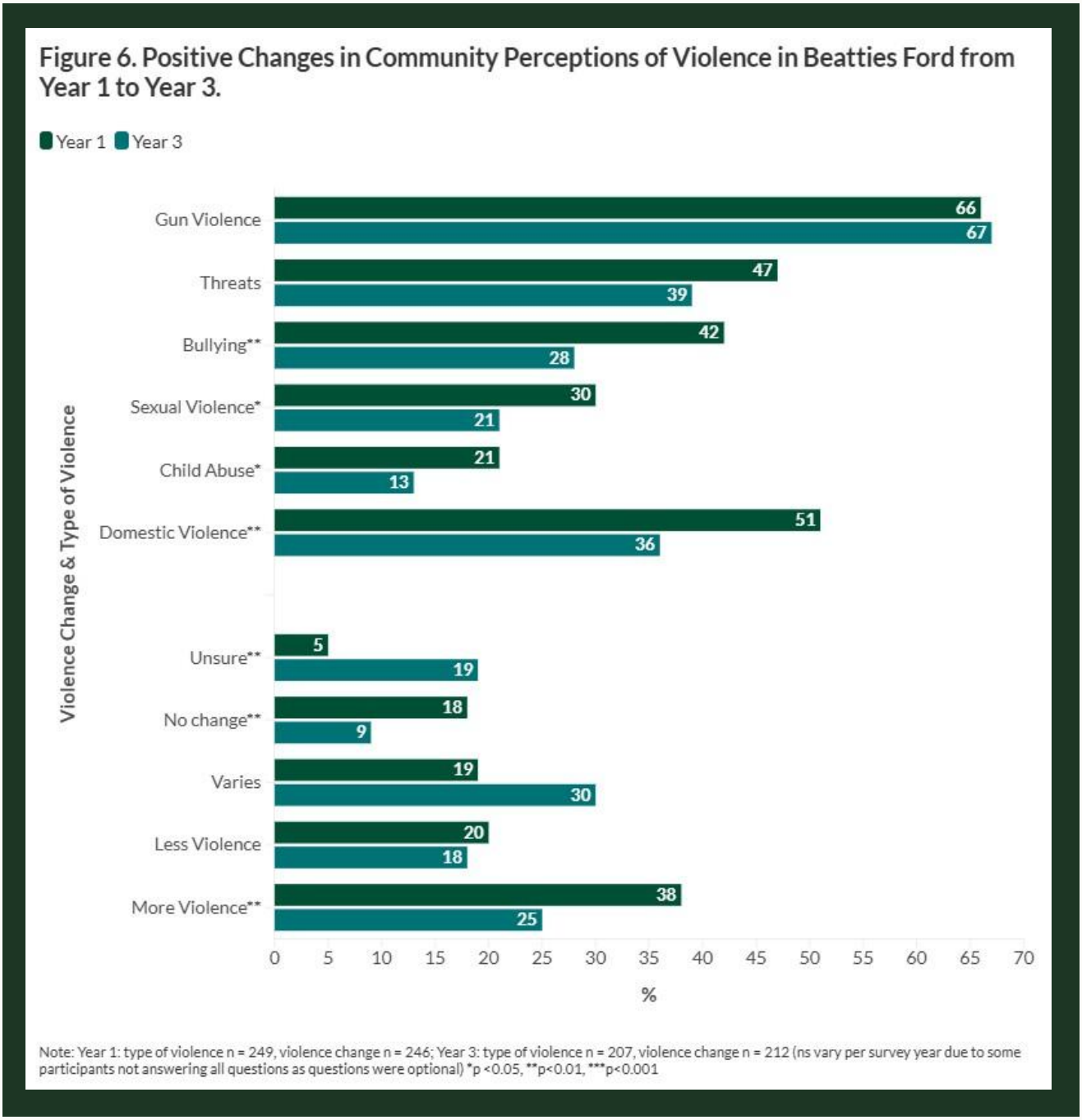
On the other hand, they discussed the area’s susceptibility to crime, stating that *“Well, a lot of crime, a lot of killings, a lot of stuff like that. Always have been. Since I was a kid, it's always been a lot of crime still to this day."*

Community Perceptions of Violence and Violence Change in Beatties Ford

Significantly more participants in Year 1 agreed that people are worried about violence in Beatties Ford (70% versus 63%, $p<0.001$). **Yet, a higher percentage of individuals in Year 1 also felt that the community is a safe place to live** compared to the Year 3 sample (52% versus 45%, $p<001$). These findings are contradictory and may be related to the larger proportion of older adults in the sample in Year 1, as well as more participants having lived in the area for 10 or more years compared to Year 3[9].

Comparing responses from the community surveys, **a smaller proportion of community members in Year 3 identified domestic violence, child abuse, sexual violence, bullying, and threats as prevalent forms of violence in Beatties Ford, compared to Year 1** (Figure 6). The differences were statistically significant for domestic violence, child abuse, and sexual violence. Respondents also identified fighting and theft as “other” forms of violence prevalent in their communities (not included in the response options).

[9] To expand on this contradiction and potential explanation, it may be that more time spent in the community contributes to knowledge and concerns around violence, but also a stronger sense of community and social support that may make one’s neighborhood feel safer. However, younger and newer residents may not have had the same level of community engagement that would bring awareness of concern and worry among neighbors.



A smaller percentage of participants in Year 3 felt that violence in Beatties Ford had increased over the past few years and that there had been no change in the level of violence compared to Year 1 (Figure 6). Rather, more felt that the prevalence of violence had varied or they were unsure about the violence rate in Year 3 compared to Year 1.

Violence Prevention Program Awareness and Engagement

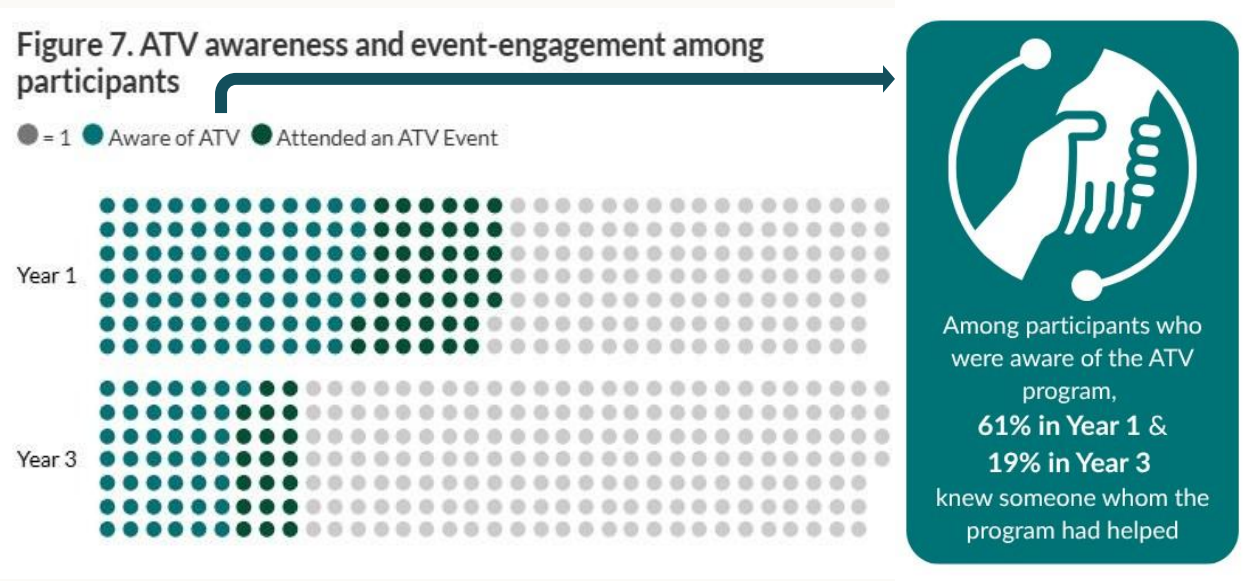
For both samples, **around three-fourths of participants were unaware of any groups or organizations currently working on violence in the Beatties Ford community.** Those who were aware of anti-violence initiatives noted local churches or nonprofit organizations as the most common groups leading these efforts.

Most participants in both Year 1 and Year 3 surveys had not been involved in anti-violence work in the past year (80% and 85%, respectively). The few who were involved in anti-violence initiatives most commonly participated through faith-based or other local community organizations.

In Year 1, around 61% had been aware of a vigil, march, or gathering in the neighborhood in response to a shooting, while 41% were aware of such an event in Year 3 (p <0.001). Similarly, more participants in Year 1 had seen antiviolence signs in the neighborhood compared to Year 3 (55% versus 41%, respectively, p <0.001).

ATV Awareness and Impacts

Around 34% of community members were aware of the ATV program in Year 1, while 21% were aware of ATV in the Year 3 survey (p = 0.001) (Figure 7). Of the participants who were aware of the ATV program, around half of the Year 1 participants and 25% of the Year 3 respondents had attended an event hosted or co-hosted by ATV. The majority of Year 1 participants who were aware of the ATV program indicated that ATV had helped someone they know settle a conflict (61%). However, only 19% of respondents in Year 3 had known someone helped by ATV (p < 0.001).



Participants who were aware of ATV were asked to write about what the program does. The most common response was related to violence prevention or reduction. Specifically, **participants noted the role of ATV in stopping, interrupting, reducing, and preventing violence in the community**. Secondly, participants believed that teaching alternative strategies for mediating and resolving conflicts and education/outreach are key parts of the ATV program in Beatties Ford.

Around 46% of Year 1 respondents and 33% of Year 3 respondents felt the program had made a positive impact on the community, noting the program's role in reducing violence through advocacy and commitment to the community, including the provision of support and resources beyond violence interruption. A substantial proportion from both surveys were unsure of ATV's impact (30% in Year 1 and 40% in Year 3).

Image source: WCNC

Conclusion

Behavioral and Social Outcomes

There was an increase in ATV participants in Year 3 (+10). Violence prevention efforts include both direct and indirect approaches. Directly, ATV acts to interrupt violence and mediate conflicts. Indirectly, the program addresses the root causes of violence, such as limited access to resources and inadequate social support. Through these combined initiatives, the program is contributing to a safer and more supportive community. We find positive outcomes for all those involved with and/or interacting with the program, including participants, staff, and the community.

Changes in Community Violence

Looking at the yearly trends, crime rates are beginning to decrease in ATV neighborhoods. The violent crime rate saw only a slight increase in the second year of the program before declining in year three. This trend was particularly noticeable in the robbery rate. While homicides with a firearm did increase during the third year of the program period, a reversal of the previous two years, these incidents remain below the level they were at before the intervention of ATV.

Image source: Queen City News

However, assessing the significance of these changes is challenging, as none of the models identified statistically significant differences in community violence outcomes, except in one case: a reduction in robbery during the program's third year. This suggests that overall changes in crime rates cannot be confidently attributed to the ATV intervention when compared to a representative sample of similar neighborhoods.

Changes in Community Norms and Awareness

Fewer community members in Year 3 identified challenges, particularly gangs and violence, and various forms of violence as prevalent in the community compared to Year 1. In addition, fewer in Year 3 felt violence had increased, and the frequency of witnessing and experiencing violence was significantly lower among the Year 3 sample. The normalization of gun use (e.g., the necessity to carry guns for respect and safety) and gun presence were less prevalent among the Year 3 survey respondents, and fewer participants agreed that community members were worried about violence in Beatties Ford compared to Year 1. Therefore, both perceptions of violence and experiences seem to have improved since the implementation of the ATV program in Beatties Ford. Current community members perceive and experience less violence compared to the initial survey sample (2022).

While the prevalence and norms around violence seem to have improved in Beatties Ford, the awareness of ATV and anti-violence initiatives did not improve. Rather, significantly fewer community members were aware of the ATV program in Beatties Ford, as well as anti-violence events and signs in Year 3 compared to Year 1. Fewer had attended an event hosted or co-hosted by ATV in the Year 3 sample. Among those who were aware of ATV, more Year 3 participants were unsure of the impacts of the program compared to Year 1, and significantly fewer knew someone whom ATV had helped. As a result, overall awareness of and engagement with anti-violence programs, including the ATV program, were lower. These differences may be due to variations in sampling strategies or shifts in program activities between the Year 1 and Year 3 surveys, such as staff turnover and the expansion into new site locations and focus areas.

In conclusion. community survey results suggest a lower rate of violence and fewer negative perceptions of the community, but also less awareness of and engagement with anti-violence initiatives, including ATV.

Image source: WCNC

Recommendations

During interviews, staff were asked to share recommendations they felt could strengthen the ATV program. Three key areas for investment emerged.

1.) Staff emphasized the need for a dedicated community resource center—a centralized location where community members could access services and support. Such a space would also allow the ATV team to host workshops without relying on external venues, providing a consistent and secure environment for programming, which staff identified as a current challenge.

2.) Staff recommended acquiring company vehicles branded with the ATV logo. These vehicles would increase visibility in the community, enhance program recognition, and reduce the burden on staff who currently use their personal vehicles for work-related travel. This change would also eliminate the need for travel reimbursements.

3.) Staff proposed launching a student ambassador program in local high schools. Through this initiative, students would promote conflict resolution and mediation skills among their peers. As students progress through the program, they would receive recognition or rewards for helping reduce violence in their schools each academic quarter.

Based on the evaluation, the evaluation team also recommends improved efforts to increase awareness of the program in Beatties Ford. Less than one-third of community survey participants knew about the program, highlighting a missed opportunity and potential for broader community outreach and involvement. The evaluation team recommends creating a website about the program and including either contact information for outreach workers or a public hotline for community members to reach out to request ATV's services and support (e.g., when violence interruption may be warranted). Putting out signs (e.g., yard signs) and flyers/brochures at organizations (e.g., libraries) could also improve outreach. To date, it is difficult to find information about the program, which is likely contributing to the continued lack of awareness.

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Appendix A. Methodology

Cure Violence Global ATV Admin Data Analysis

Administrative data were shared by ATV staff and included the following files for quantitative analysis:

- Daily Log for VIOWHR
- Participant Case Notes 2024
- Violent Incidents 2024
- Interruption Follow-Ups 2024

Quantitative analysis included filtering the data for the relevant dates (September 1, 2023 - August 31, 2024), site location (Alternatives to Violence in Beatties Ford), and/or relevant staff, and summarizing the records.

The following files also included case notes that were used to provide more context for our analysis and conclusions:

- Participant Goals
- Participant Goal Setting
- Participant Intake Assessments
- Daily Log Supervisor Manager

Qualitative Methods

For the Year 3 analysis, the Institute conducted interviews with two ATV violence interrupters. Interview questions were open-ended and explored staff members' roles, activities, program outcomes, and community perceptions. Staff interviews lasted approximately 60-90 minutes. Participants received a $25 Food Lion gift card at the end of their interview. Audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed by Rev.com and coded in MaxQDA to find themes.

Due to the small sample size in Year 3, our ability to draw conclusions about the program's impacts was limited. However, staff provided critical insights about the program and their efforts within the community. Interview results from Year 3 were combined with those from Year 1 (n=5) and administrative data to understand the ATV program activities and potential

impacts. The evaluation team at the UI also compared Year 1 and Year 3 staff interviews to assess potential changes in the program over time.

Community Survey Methods

The surveys were administered by UI staff and graduate student volunteers at various public locations throughout the Beatties Ford Community. Participants confirmed they were 18 years or older and provided informed consent before taking the survey. Online Qualtrics surveys were administered using UI iPads and laptops, and hard copy surveys were administered when digital devices were not available. Participants received a $25 gift card to Food Lion, a local grocery store chain, upon survey completion.

Year 1 and Year 3 survey data were combined and cleaned in Excel. Exploratory and comparative quantitative data analyses were conducted using Stata/SE 18.0. All distribution variables are relevant to the specific survey year and the total sample for that year. Frequencies of demographics and response variables (e.g., specific challenges, strengths, forms of violence, physical injury due to violence) were tested for independence using Pearson's chi-square ($\alpha = 0.05$) to evaluate whether there was a significant association between the frequency and the survey year[10]. Open-ended response data were coded in MaxQDA to quantify themes. Significance was set at $p<0.05$.

Quantitative Crime Analysis

Types of Crimes

We leverage publicly available data from CMPD to create the final dataset. We begin by downloading the Violent Crime dataset via the Charlotte Open Data Portal. This includes the number of monthly incidents recorded for various crimes, including aggravated assaults, robbery, and nonfatal gunshot injuries. A secondary dataset specifically focused on Homicide is also used, as it includes the reported weapon used. We filter the data to only include incidents reported to have a firearm before counting the total number of monthly incidents by NPA.[11] We then combine the two datasets before separating the

[10] To infer potential changes overtime from Year 1 to Year 3

[11]

types of aggravated assaults (non-firearm and firearm) and combining sexually violent crimes. This gives us the following crimes to analyze for this study:

1. Aggravated Assault- this is an assault that causes serious bodily injury. This is a more serious crime than simple assault but less severe than felony assault, attempted murder, and attempted voluntary manslaughter.

2. Robbery - two types of robbery are included under the term of violent crime:

    - *Armed Robbery* constitutes the taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear.

    - Strong-armed Robbery includes muggings and similar offenses in which only personal weapons such as hands, arms, feet, fists, and teeth are employed or their use is threatened to deprive the victim of possessions.

3. Rape - penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim.[12]

4. Homicide - The willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another. Deaths caused by negligence, attempts to kill, assaults to kill, suicides, accidental deaths, or justifiable homicides are excluded.

Comparison Neighborhoods

We begin the analysis by utilizing a statistical technique known as propensity score matching to identify control units (neighborhoods or NPAs) that are similar to ATV neighborhoods based on their observed characteristics or covariates. Matching on covariates that include the overall crime rate in 2018 and various demographic and economic variables allows us to, theoretically, reduce bias and mimic a randomized experiment where treatment assignment is independent of the outcomes.

The method utilizes two different matching techniques. The first is the nearest neighbor method, wherein each treated unit is paired with the control unit that is closest to it in terms of

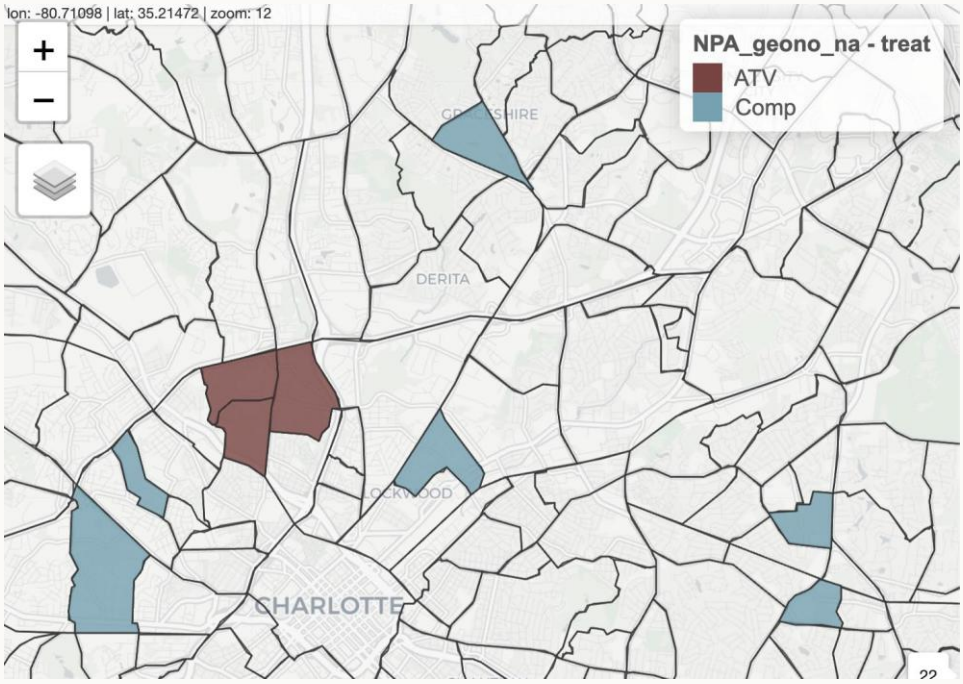
[12] The types of firearms included in this designation include "Firearm", "Firearms", "Handgun", "Handgun, Rifle", “Handgun, Shotgun", "Rifle", "Rifle, Shotgun", and "Shotgun".

The previous definition of rape restricted the act to when a “man having sexual bodily connections with a woman forcibly and against her will” until 2013.

the distance metric specified (here, a generalized linear model distance). This method matches treated units (ATV NPAs) to control units based on the similarity of

their covariate values, with the closest control unit being selected as the match for each treated unit. The second method calculates the Mahalanobis distance to account for correlations between variables when calculating distances between data points. This additional step provides an added layer of robustness, increasing the matching method's overall efficacy.

Figure A1: ATV and Comparison Neighborhoods after Matching



After successfully pairing ATV neighborhoods with one control neighborhood each, we take another step to remove these matched neighborhoods and the NPAs that are adjacent (contiguous) to them. This step accounts for the potential spillover effects that can occur when analyzing crime data. A second matching process is then conducted with the new subset of data, ensuring that every NPA in the Beatties Ford Treatment area has two comparative neighborhoods for the overall analysis. The figure above shows the ATV and comparative neighborhoods.

Models for Analysis

The analysis for the Year One report utilized a traditional difference-in-difference (DiD) model to estimate the causal impact of the ATV program on various crime rates across neighborhoods. Now, in the third year, the traditional DiD model becomes less reliable due to the assumption of continuity over time. This framework assumes that the treatment effect is constant across all

treated units and over time. In other words, this model expects the impact of ATV to be the same in the first and third years of the program.

To address this, we specified a model where the treatment effect is allowed to vary by year, enabling us to examine whether the timing of the intervention influenced its effectiveness. The heterogeneous DiD model is estimated using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, with robust standard errors clustered at the neighborhood (NPA) level to account for within-neighborhood correlation over time. Including neighborhood and year fixed effects ensured that unobserved, time-invariant neighborhood characteristics and common year-specific shocks were controlled for in the analysis.

Table A1: Results from HetDiD Models

	Violent Crimes	Aggravated Assaults			Nonfatal Gunshots	Homicide
		Firearm	Other	Robbery		
First Year	0.796	0.819	0.77	-0.055	0.145	-0.047
	(0.88)	(0.53)	(0.84)	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.04)
Second Year	0.844	0.768	0.622	0.177	-0.065	-0.032
	(1.80)	(1.52)	(1.62)	(0.16)	(0.15)	(0.06)
Third Year	-0.077	0.37	0.311	-0.296*	-0.039	-0.026
	(0.96)	(0.66)	(0.85)	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.04)

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses; * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001

The models compare the crime rates of interest after the implementation of ATV to see if a discernible difference exists between Beatties Ford and a representative group of comparison neighborhoods. The outcome, the average treatment effect on the treated units (ATET), predicts whether the crime rate would be higher or lower than if an area never had the ATV program. While the findings are aggregated, the models compare neighborhoods by group and account for other factors, such as previous crime rates.

Appendix B. Limitations

For research limitations experienced in Year 1, see the Year 1 report cited in the reference list below.

Participant survey and participant outcomes/changes: Participant survey and participant outcomes/changes: Unfortunately, we were not able to use participant survey data due to a sample size of less than 10 participants. Following research ethics protocols and guidelines, it is recommended not to use survey data from samples less than 10 to mitigate any risk of identification and confidentiality breaches. As a result, we were not able to substantially answer our research questions related to changes in participant behaviors and violent incidents.

Community survey: While the Year 3 sample was nearly evenly distributed for age and representative of the population, Year 1 had a disproportionate number of respondents who were between the ages of 45 and 64 years (57%). Thus, the age differences in the samples may contribute to the variation in findings between Year 1 and Year 3. Furthermore, since the sample from Year 1 is not representative of the community in terms of age, the findings from Year 1 cannot be applied to the overall population. The Year 3 sample also had more individuals who were new to Beatties Ford, many of whom may have been college students studying at Johnson C. Smith University.

Staff Interviews: As we were only able to complete 2 staff interviews for the Year 3 analysis, we were not able to make direct claims based on the data collected. Both staff members were violence interrupters (VIs), which limited the amount of information we got on program participants' progress and growth in the program since VI's do not directly work with participants. However, staff provided meaningful insights about how the ATV program works, the kinds of activities provided, and recommendations that would help improve the program. Staff were also able to share the improvements they have seen in the participants they have worked with directly, noting participants' improved behavior and academics. Due to the limited interviews we were able to conduct, we reverted back to the Year 1 staff interviews to learn more about other staff members' roles (site supervisor & outreach workers) and participant progress, activities, and growth. Combining both Year 1 and Year 3 staff interviews provided a clearer understanding of staff members' roles, activities, and participant progress.

Appendix C. Participant Goal Setting

ATV participants set goals at the start of their participation. Staff document updates to those goals- whether they've been met, the participant is actively working toward them, or the goals have changed.

The initial goal setting includes:

- violence safety goals and the services needed to meet them
- health goals to improve health and the services needed to meet them
- Legal goals and the services needed to meet them
- Financial goals and the services needed to meet them
- Educational goals and the services needed to meet them
- Housing goals and the services needed to meet them
- Social goals and the services needed to meet them

We were not provided data on how many met their goals.

Appendix D. Descriptive Statistics of Community Survey Samples

Table D1. Summary of participant characteristics by survey year

Demographic Variable	Year 1	Year 3	Total Sample
Race / Ethnicity	n = 245	n = 208	n = 453
Black or African American	84%	87%	85%
White	4%	4%	4%
More than one race	4%	3%	3%
Asian	1%	1%	1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.4%	1%	1%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	2%	1%	2%
Prefer not to answer	6%	3%	4%
Hispanic/Latinx	7%	5%	6%
Gender	n = 244	n = 210	n = 454
Female	52%	60%	56%
Male	47%	38%	43%
Nonbinary	*n/a*	1%	1%
Age Range (years)	n = 249	n = 218	n = 467
18 - 24.9	13%	16%	14%
25 - 34.9	8%	15%	11%
35 - 44.9	13%	14%	14%
45 - 54.9	23%***	17%	20%
55 - 64.9	29%	17%	23%
65 - 74.9	13%	15%	14%
75+	1%	7%	4%
Years Lived in Beatties Ford	n = 239	n = 189	n = 428
0 - 1.9	8%	22%	14%
2 - 5.9	23%	14%	24%
6 - 10.9	21%	15%	18%
11 - 20.9	21%***	13%	19%
21 - 30.9	6%	12%	8%
31+	21%***	13%	18%

*p <0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001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