

Community Impact Statement

Date: May 10, 2007

Offender's Name: _____

Victim's Name: _____ and the residents of Morgan Park

Area of the crime: ___ block of ___ Avenue in Morgan Park

Morgan Park is a small, historic neighborhood of approximately 800 households, with a diverse population. This is a multi-generational neighborhood, their parents lived and worked there, they have made their home there, and they hope that their children would make their home there.

On May 14th over 100 residents attended a Community Meeting to discuss the shooting in Morgan Park which had occurred 4 days earlier. Three weeks later we met again to talk about the impact of the crime on our community. The thoughts that are in this statement were shared by over 30 former and present Morgan Park residents, and supported by all of those that have signed the Community Impact Statement.

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Fear, anger, frustration and shock are feelings that have risen to the surface as Morgan Park residents share how this crime has affected them.

Residents first shared their memories of how Morgan Park "used to be", and then they shared their sense of loss. The history of our Company Town, the safety - that they used to feel, the neighborhood pride - that has been damaged. "We all used to look out for each other, now we feel like we all need to watch out for each other" was shared by one resident. "This has had a terrible effect on my outlook, I'm afraid for my 2 daughters," shared one Mom. "The biggest impact on me is to think that there are guns in our neighborhood" and that there are people willing to use them to shoot each other.

Morgan Parkers have been working really hard in their neighborhood, starting Citizen Patrols and Block Watches, and has an active community group bringing community members together for community beautification and other projects.

"One crime has done more damage than all the good things that we have done" said one active resident. This crime has brought to the surface some underlying tensions and prejudices, that Morgan Parkers have been striving to overcome. "I have found that I am wrestling with my internal prejudices, I want to back away from that, and work to not become judgmental and cynical" stated one resident who is also a landlord.

Residents expressed frustration in our judicial system. "Something must be done to our Judicial system." "Criminals have fallen between the cracks." "Our judicial system is too slow moving - why?" "We need to hold people accountable." "Will the County Attorney hold the offender accountable?" "Why don't we have a better system of tracking criminals, especially felons?"

Morgan Parkers have always prided themselves on the low level of crime in their neighborhood. Fear is a new feeling for Morgan Parkers, yet it now hangs like a cloud over the community and is pervading the conversations like a cold fog across the River. One husband shared "I was out of town, and my wife couldn't get into our home, she was terrified. We have been thinking about moving!" One young mother shared, "I used to walk down the street nearly every day with my young son, now I avoid it." "I am a light sleeper, now I am afraid with all the noises that I hear," stated a resident.

This crime is affecting our children. This crime "will affect our youth programming. Is the neighborhood safe for children? Can parents let them walk to our playgrounds alone?" Instead of spending time providing kids with fun and entertaining activities... "Parks & Rec staff will need to provide counseling to kids who are afraid."

Residents are angry. Within one week of the crime committed by the offender, we noticed an increase in the number of For Sale signs in our neighborhood. Realtors report that people are hesitant to look at homes in Morgan Park. Landlords report people are more hesitant to rent in Morgan Park. A crime like the one committed by the offender has affected the economic stability of our neighborhood. Thus, property values will go down.

A third-generation Morgan Park resident states, "It is distressing and saddening how this event has heightened the sense of loss in our community: loss of security, loss of trust, and the loss of the feeling of true freedom. While the actions of one person do make a community, the actions of this one person have had a profound negative effect on all the positive work that has gone into this community by many. It is critical to the citizens and renewal projects of Morgan Park, and the entire City, that the Judicial system take strong action to remove the offender from our community.

The crime committed by the offender, was not unlike an act of terrorism-creating a pervasive atmosphere of fear throughout Morgan Park, fear for and by the residents themselves, for the children of this community, and fear for what the future may bring.

This act is causing a decrease in the economic activity in the Park, as homes go unsold and rental property stands empty due to the unwillingness of people to come to a community whose reputation has been so severely damaged by the senseless shooting of one man by another--two men who didn't even COME from Morgan Park, men who should have considered themselves guests-not agents for such a negative change.

The residents of Morgan Park DEMAND that justice be served and that the offender not be allowed to "slip through the cracks" like has happened to him in the past, that our judicial system consider fully the total impact of his senseless criminal acts on this innocent community and it's residents, and that he be sentenced to the fullest extent of the law.

Within a community and a society, people can support one another though job loss, changes in culture, and other challenges that affect the face of a community. Violence, however, strips the members of a community of the basic freedoms given us by God and our Government. The message shall be clear: activities that detract from our sense of security will not be tolerated in this community. This community has endured a great deal in the past 90 years, and we will be renewed in this event once justice has prevailed.