The single greatest influence on postwar American criminal justice policy was President Johnson’s Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, whose main report, *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society* (1967), was hailed by liberals and criminologists as a great breakthrough. Its conclusions quickly became the conventional wisdom, laying the foundation for criminal justice policy throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and into the 1990s.

The commission made two recommendations that were especially important at the time. First, it insisted that police firmly adhere to lawful procedures when handling offenders. Indeed, the Supreme Court, aware of the brutal investigating tactics that police chiefs either could not or would not rein in,
had already handed down rulings describing how a lawful investigation would be conducted. Second, the commission urged the nation’s criminal justice agencies, especially police departments, to improve their relations with minority communities. If the police did not directly cause every riot in the 1960s, as their most hostile critics alleged, their insensitivity toward minorities certainly triggered many.

But, for all its key contributions, many of the commission’s other findings and conclusions are being challenged, and even abandoned, today. Its attempt to “professionalize” criminal justice is, in particular, under assault. According to the commission, the amalgam of police, prosecutors, jails, prisons, probation, parole, and courts comprised a “criminal justice system”—the “business” of which was to process cases. Only felonies like murder, rape, assault, and robbery were recognized as serious, while comparatively minor offenses, like public drunkenness and other “victimless” crimes, would essentially be decriminalized. Moreover, responses to crime were to be handled only by highly trained “professionals.” Citizens would report crimes and act as witnesses. Crime prevention, to the extent that it occurred in this “system,” would be achieved through incarceration and deterrence.

Underpinning this notion of a criminal justice “system” was a “root-causes” understanding of crime. The commission argued that the root causes of crime were racism, poverty, and social injustice—implying that crime prevention would require the elimination or amelioration of these conditions through radical social change.

In fact, the policies derived from root causes ideology and the narrowly defined functioning of criminal justice agencies have hindered crime prevention and innovative thinking about crime control for decades. According to liberals, crime can be prevented only by massive social changes that address crime’s root causes. Conservatives have their own theory of root causes: To prevent crime, the decline of families and corrosion of traditional values must be reversed. Until recently, little was expected of criminal justice agencies except to respond to crime and process the ensuing cases.

The most highly publicized rejection of this old paradigm, and the most prominent battleground for its survival or demise, is in New York City, where, under Mayor Giuliani and
Commissioners Bratton and Safir, an array of aggressive, new police tactics, along with numerous public and private initiatives, led to an unprecedented reduction in crime. But New York City’s success has engendered both welcome support and outright hostility. Critics in the popular media concede that the police department’s new strategies have helped reduce crime but charge that lower crime rates have come at an unacceptable cost to civil liberties, especially those of poor and minority residents. Skeptical criminologists deny any linkage between police tactics and the drop in crime, attributing the reduction instead to changes in economic, demographic, or drug-use patterns. The root-causes philosophy drives many of these denials—for how could crime rates drop except through economic or social change?

The debate continues. But New York City is not alone in adopting and implementing new crime-prevention strategies—cities like San Diego and Boston have been just as successful. And more than just police departments are participating in the reforms. Prosecutors are changing their practices as well, joined in a growing number of cities by probation and parole officers, the courts, and even wardens.

**Turning a corner**

In policing, the President’s Commission largely endorsed the early twentieth-century Progressive agenda. Yet, even as reform was being implemented—improved recruitment, training, and administration, and tighter control to reduce corruption—the seeds of its demise were being sown. Despite police claims that adequate numbers of professional police could reduce crime, the opposite occurred: Beginning in the 1960s, crime began to rise.

In 1975, eight years after the commission released its report, the Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment was published. The study concluded that the impact of police patrolling in cars on crime, and citizen fear of crime, was negligible. Then in 1977, the first of several “response-time” studies appeared, showing similarly that rapid response to calls enhanced neither police effectiveness nor citizen satisfaction with the police. By the late 1980s, incident-based reactive policing—taking police off streets and placing them in cars so
that they could engage in preventive patrol and rapid response to calls—had "de-policed" most major cities. Gangs and drug dealers controlled many public spaces. As Ed Davis, Chief of the Lowell (MA) Police Department, has said: "The trouble is we were all doing our jobs well: police, prosecutors, courts, and corrections. We were making good arrests; prosecutors were handling cases well, and so on. Yet, despite this, things were getting worse and worse on the streets."

In retrospect, early clues about the shape of policing's future were present by the late 1970s and early 1980s. Team policing—a 1970s community-based approach—passed preliminary evaluations and became popular with the citizens and officers who practiced it, though somehow it never prevailed. Foot patrol, despite being viewed as a dumping ground for incompetent officers by most police executives from the 1940s on, remained popular with citizens and politicians, and research suggested that it reduced fear. In a 1979 article, University of Wisconsin professor Herman Goldstein proposed an alternative philosophy of policing that received immediate attention: Police would be problem solvers rather than "incident reactors." James Q. Wilson and George Kelling, in 1982, advanced the "broken-windows" metaphor: Like a broken window that invites greater damage, minor offenses not only create fear but, unchecked, can lead to an influx of violent crime and urban decay.

During the 1980s, police began to return to tactics that maintained close links to communities, such as foot and bicycle patrol, permanent beats, and devolution of authority to district commanders, sergeants, and beat cops. Going back to neighborhood patrols was not welcomed by all. Some citizens were suspicious of a police force that was out of touch with the local community. Citizen resentment only exacerbated the police officers' fear of operating in these neighborhoods. But, in other areas, police found willing partners in community groups, business-improvement districts, effective private security, churches, a new breed of public-housing administrators, social workers, school administrators, and local politicians.

**Community prosecution in the beginning**

While police were the first of the criminal justice agencies to try to improve their relationship with citizens, their appar-
ent success was not unnoticed by prosecutors. Frustrated by what seemed an endless routine of imprisoning criminals after the fact, many prosecutors began to think that they, too, had to devise tactics that would renew public spaces. Thus, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, district attorneys and county prosecutors began exploring new roles in crime reduction and prevention, and more direct relationships with citizens. In some cases, police spurred prosecutors into such relationships. As Jeremy Travis, Director of the National Institute of Justice, recently put it: "Once police return to communities, they are the magnets that draw prosecutors into the community as well." Marion County Prosecutor Scott Newman described the impetus in a different way.

I felt instinctively that, as community policing was being implemented in Indianapolis ... what would happen to me if I didn't change the way I did business was the community would draw closer to the police department. And the community and the police department, together, would come to despise my office ... and ... tend to blame [failures] on me as the most visible proponent of the criminal justice system.

Today, a new movement, "community prosecution," is capturing the attention of many prosecutors. In many senses, community prosecution represents the next stage in the dismantling of the old paradigm.

The idea that prosecutors have a broader function than "case processing"—taking cases handed to them by the police after a crime is committed—is not new. The origins of a more complex view of prosecution lay in research conducted by the American Bar Foundation (ABF) in the 1950s, which, by any standard, is one of the most thorough studies concerning the functioning of criminal justice agencies ever conducted. The ABF survey was unique in that it researched and documented the law in operation rather than the law on the books. The study examined the routine, daily work of police, prosecutors, judges, and corrections officers in three states: Kansas, Michigan, and Wisconsin. The survey found that criminal justice officials confront intricate problems by routinely using their discretion not only to judge whether and how to process and prosecute cases but also to address problems using other methods. Observational data documenting prosecutors' actions
showed that minor offenses, as opposed to serious felonies, could be considered significant; that full prosecution of cases can sometimes be ineffective; that case attrition—charges dropped by prosecutors short of full prosecution—might reflect a judgment that a problem was best solved outside of prosecution; and that prosecutors could sense, amid the flow of cases, and in the political pressures emanating from the community, the possibility and the urgent need to address certain types of problems.

In these findings lay an alternative to the traditional model of prosecutors as felony-case processors. But it is not hard to understand why the survey's findings failed to capture mainstream attention in prosecution as they did in policing. Much of prosecutors' work is shielded from public and professional scrutiny and tends not to arouse the same public concern as police abuses. A prosecutor's decision not to charge is far less visible to the public than a police officer's decision not to arrest. The case method in legal education, with its focus on adversarial litigation, also fails to motivate prosecutors to play a broader and different role in communities.

Nevertheless, prosecutors' behavior in the ABF Survey illustrated what was, in effect, the first generation of problem solving by prosecutors outside of traditional case processing. The survey showed individual prosecutors solving problems on an ad hoc basis, through informal mediation or other means, with little, if any, oversight. These ideas did not come to dominate research immediately, but they also did not go unnoticed. The director of the ABF survey, Frank Remington, continued to push the idea that prosecutors were essentially problem solvers and decision makers who regularly chose alternatives to formal prosecution. Then, during the 1980s, a second generation of prosecutorial problem solving began, driven by prosecutors seeking to address the growing violence associated with drugs on the streets.

**What the drug epidemic wrought**

More than anything else, the crack-cocaine epidemic awakened prosecutors to the effects of drugs on neighborhood life and inspired them to change their approach toward their jobs. Prosecutors such as Norm Maleng in Seattle, Michael Schrunk
in Portland, Robert Macy in Oklahoma County, and Janet Reno in Miami cultivated innovative problem-solving strategies involving aggressive, multifaceted attacks on drug abuse within communities. As Barbara Boland and Kevin Healey have documented, in *Prosecutorial Response to Heavy Drug Caseloads*, drug education, deterrence, and treatment, as well as the prosecution of drug offenders, were among the new tactics initiated by prosecutors.

During the late 1980s, when drug-related crimes threw many Kansas City (MO) neighborhoods into turmoil, prosecutor Albert Riederer thought of using a county sales tax to underwrite a broad-based program to combat drug trafficking, drug use, and drug-related crimes in general. The tax passed. Its revenue now supports a coordinated law-enforcement, drug-treatment, and drug-prevention effort, under the guidance of the county prosecutor, known today as COMBAT (Community Backed Anti-Drug Tax).

In Kings County (Brooklyn), in the early 1990s, District Attorney Charles Hynes reorganized his office to create five geographically distinct prosecution zones. A team was assigned to prosecute felonies that occurred in each zone. Team members would attend community meetings to become acquainted with the specific problems of their zone. To further protect victims of crime, Hynes created a Crime Victims Counseling Unit, a Domestic Violence Bureau, trained special prosecutors to assist victims of specific types of crime, and, following incidents in Howard Beach and Bensonhurst, developed a Civil Rights Bureau to handle hate-crime cases. To address racial tensions, Hynes began Project Legal Lives, which assigned assistant district attorneys to teach local fifth-grade students about the legal issues concerning racial bias and drugs. He also set up citizen advisory councils and a drug-diversion program for nonviolent offenders. Hynes's creations have since been replicated in many other cities.

These and other problem-solving and community-directed efforts began when prosecutors discovered what the police had experienced earlier. Citizens want quality-of-life issues to be taken seriously; they see problems in a neighborhood context. Prosecutors found that the range of problems raised by citizens required them to develop a broader “tool kit” of tactics beyond mere case processing.
Community prosecution today

At this nascent stage, rooted in the evolving practices of prosecutors in mid-sized to large cities, community prosecution is a concept still defining itself. Three common elements emerge, however.

First, prosecutors are redefining their traditional mission (achieving justice through effective felony-case processing) to include the prevention of crime. They now view crime more broadly—to include not only serious and violent crime but low-level, quality-of-life offenses as well. They are also considering the relationship between the public's fear of crime and crime itself. This broader mission means that prosecutors will place a greater emphasis on the cases and offenders that citizens identify as high priority—whether it be street prostitution, drug dealers, or violent youth gangs.

Second, prosecutors are moving away from a traditional reliance on criminal law and criminal prosecution toward a "problem-oriented prosecution" strategy. In other words, prosecutors are changing and diversifying their tactics. In addition to criminal prosecution, they will pursue civil remedies such as nuisance abatement; they will seek restraining orders to keep dangerous offenders from returning to certain neighborhoods; and they will work with local health- and safety-code enforcement. Prosecutors are also hiring more nonlawyers who can deal effectively with matters of public health, substance-abuse treatment, social services, public relations, community organizing, marketing, journalism, and crime prevention. Former Jackson County (Kansas City) prosecutor Claire McCaskill, who has hired more of these specialists than most attorneys, praises them for prodding prosecutors into thinking "outside the box." Thinking more creatively, these prosecutors then go on to set up community courts, drug-case diversion programs, substance-abuse clinics, and children's advocacy centers. They also obtain funding for and administer programs that target crime, poverty, and quality-of-life issues in depressed neighborhoods and housing developments.

Finally, community prosecutors are collaborating more closely with other criminal justice agencies, the private sector, and citizens. Prosecutors understand that they cannot do their job alone. Thus they now work with citizens and other agents to
identify priorities jointly, approach crime in a community context, and encourage collaboration that ultimately reduces and prevents crime. Frequently, prosecutors initiate these collaborations, even though the goal may be for citizens to eventually bear the main responsibility for prevention efforts, with prosecutors and police acting as back-up. Across the country, these elements are increasingly visible in prosecutors' offices, and they take a variety of forms in the field.

Making neighborhoods safe

In and around Boston, Safe Neighborhood Initiatives (SNIs) represent a version of community prosecution that has garnered strong support from citizens and police. Former Massachusetts Attorney General Scott Harshbarger (a Democrat), along with Suffolk County District Attorney Ralph Martin (a Republican) and Boston Police Superintendent-in-Chief William Bratton, created the first SNI in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston in 1993. Since then, the District Attorney, Attorney General, and the police have collaborated in developing several other SNIs. All aim at enhancing public safety in neighborhoods replete with high crime, unemployment, large numbers of immigrants and minorities, and dilapidated housing.

The core principles that guide SNI strategy are: coordinated law enforcement, neighborhood revitalization, and prevention and treatment. Each SNI represents a partnership among the criminal justice agencies, the mayor's office, and the local community. SNI activities are customized for a particular neighborhood, with which prosecutors have become intimately familiar. A Citizens' Advisory or Coordinating Council—comprised of residents, merchants, tenant associations, the Chamber of Commerce, ethnic and cultural or religious groups, school personnel, social-service agencies (many locally based), and elected officials—guides the SNI.

Assistant district attorneys and attorneys general assigned to the SNIs have different responsibilities from those of regular prosecutors. SNI prosecutors screen cases arising in the locality and prosecute them in the neighborhood district courts and Superior Courts, targeting serious and violent offenders, along with minor offenses, that threaten the neighborhood. When in court, prosecutors bring the views of community residents be-
before the bench, explaining the impact of the offender or offense on the neighborhood. Good litigation skills must be accompanied by an aggressive pursuit of local crime and safety problems. One prosecutor prepared a genealogy for other prosecutors and police, identifying family members, by name, who were recidivist offenders from the local SNI neighborhood. Prosecutors in another SNI developed a “Johns Project,” giving offenders the option of doing community service—cleaning up local streets in full view of the media—instead of going to trial. With police, they planned stings to lure offenders with outstanding warrants to return to the SNI neighborhood to “re-deem a prize”; instead, the offenders were arrested.

In most SNIs, a community liaison or an organizer, working for the district attorney or attorney general’s office, coordinates the extralegal work of the SNI, frequently with the assistance of the police, and regularly contacts local citizens and groups. But the prosecutors themselves also need strong social skills, as they must get to know, and work with, the citizens. Attending SNI meetings and functions in the community is essential to the job, and SNI prosecutors speak at schools, Kiwanis Clubs, meetings of senior citizens, and tenant associations.

The partnership with citizens through SNIs addresses many social problems. The current priority, put forward by citizens in most SNIs, is reducing domestic violence. Local social workers and health-care providers are joining with police and prosecutors to approach the courts for assistance and to devise a comprehensive strategy. Citizens also help to determine which types of cases, chronic offenders, or offenses are to be pursued by prosecutors. Many cases involve low-level crimes and quality-of-life violations. In the past two years, citizens have reported drug dealers frequenting certain street corners; prostitutes arriving from New York and working out of certain houses; gang activity in schools; residents who fail to control their children, litter freely, and play loud music; and fleets of commercial vehicles illegally parked on narrow public streets, leaving no room for residents’ cars.

In the Grove Hall SNI in Boston during 1998, citizens complained about crowds gathering around a few liquor stores late into the night. The drinking and traffic jams were keeping residents awake until 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning. Not
only did local residents want relief, but they, like the police, wanted to prevent an outbreak of violence. Residents, prosecutors, and police approached the stores to ask for their cooperation. Failing to get it from one, they petitioned the Licensing Board to hold a public hearing in which they would discuss their concerns and ask the board to roll back the store's closing time. After a well-organized hearing, in which citizens, police, and prosecutors all presented arguments, they were successful.

In recent years, crime rates have fallen further in many SNI areas than non-SNI areas. While violent crime fell 6 percent in Boston in 1997-98, it dropped 12 percent in the Dorchester SNI area—and it's important to keep in mind that SNIs are usually implemented in the most crime-ridden neighborhoods. Prosecutors say their cases are stronger, and residents report feeling safer. People have stopped moving out of Dorchester, Chelsea, and other SNI areas. Local realtors report that they are selling more houses in the neighborhood than ever before to previous residents and new residents. Businesses are opening or expanding, and restaurants and shops are opening at night for those who wish to go out after dark.

New modes and forms

In locations around the country, community prosecution has taken different forms. Community prosecution in Austin (TX) is based upon what District Attorney Ronald Earle calls “community justice in Austin.” Earle, in office since 1976, has established numerous integrated initiatives between the public and private sectors in Travis County. He drafted state legislation for and spearheaded a Community Justice Council and Community Justice Task Force—groups that bring together elected officials, public professionals, and citizens to oversee all criminal justice operations in the county. After founding a Children’s Advocacy Center and establishing its self-sufficiency, Earle passed it over to community control, as he has done with many other programs. Later, he set up several Neighborhood Conference Committees, in which adult volunteers hear cases diverted from the Juvenile Court involving nonviolent youthful offenders. Individual sentences, or “contracts,” are created, including restitution, community service, and mentoring.
For the past several years, assistant prosecutors in Kansas City (MO) have attended neighborhood-association meetings, informed residents about the status of cases involving local incidents, and worked closely with police to address crime and public-safety issues of concern to residents. In August of 1997, County Prosecutor Claire McCaskill created a new neighborhood Justice Prosecution Program in which four prosecutors and a supervisor are assigned to work with police, city agencies, school officials, neighborhood groups, business executives, and church leaders within geographic areas coinciding with Kansas City Police Department patrol divisions. Prosecutors for each area develop crime reduction and prevention strategies, focusing on crime patterns that impact several neighborhoods. In addition, a Child Protection Liaison Attorney, who devises plans to reduce child abuse and neglect, is assisting the East Patrol Division, where the highest number of calls originate. A Truancy Coordinator is working with prosecutors to set up truancy projects for schools in each division. The prosecutor-led Drug Abatement Response Team (DART) assists Neighborhood Justice prosecutors in closing down drug houses, working with landlords, and addressing environmental pollution.

In Portland, Oregon, District Attorney Mike Schrunk's neighborhood district attorneys work out of storefront offices, and were initially funded by business owners. The attorneys cooperate closely with citizens and police, focusing on destructive street behavior and low-level offenses that are particularly troublesome in the neighborhood. Rather than simply prosecuting offenders, the neighborhood attorneys pursue a host of other tactics. To reduce illegal camping and massive dumping of garbage, citizens, police, and district attorneys worked out a multifaceted strategy. They posted "no camping" signs, conducted citizen patrols, and encouraged citizens to inform police (who, in turn, would ask the campers to leave). They also had city agencies clear the brush and build barriers to obstruct spaces for camping.

Prosecutor Scott Newman's team of "street level advocates" in Indianapolis are prosecutors who work from district police stations, assisting police and citizens in developing and implementing tactics for addressing neighborhood-specific crime and safety problems. This model of community prosecution has
gained considerable attention and is being replicated around the country. Within the last two years, Newman has led in developing a community justice pilot project—a community court to be located in a Weed and Seed area on Indianapolis's northwest side.

In each of these cases, prosecutors are emphasizing crime reduction, crime prevention, minor offenses that disturb communities, and strengthening bonds with citizens, other public agencies, and community groups.

**Signs of success**

Prosecutors, like the police before them, are moving beyond the ideological impasse of "root causes" by attempting to integrate case processing and crime prevention. City attorneys, state attorneys general, and federal prosecutors are also moving toward a problem-solving or community model. They have been joined by probation and parole officers, courts, and corrections personnel, although these latter officials have moved at a somewhat slower pace than prosecutors and police.

The involvement of district attorneys and county prosecutors is important to the development of the new crime-control paradigm, and to collaborative, community-based problem-solving initiatives for several reasons. In a 1992 article, "The Prosecutor As Problem-Solver," law professor and former prosecutor Ronald Goldstock proposed that prosecutors were uniquely prepared to lead such efforts because of their power and authority, their strategic position between police and the courts, their contacts in the executive and legislative branches, and the discretion they exercise. As we look at cities where community prosecution has been cultivated, it appears that the effects are at least as powerful and far-reaching as those of community policing. When community policing and prosecution are combined, the results can be dramatic. Key factors are prosecutors' status as the most powerful locally elected criminal justice officials, and their ability to convene essential players and muster resources from both public and private sectors for use in problem solving.

Evidence is accumulating that community partnerships in crime prevention work. Measures of success include not only the reduction of crime but the willingness of businesses to
resume or begin reliable delivery services, clean and accessible parks, graffiti-free walls and litter-free parking lots, the absence of scantily clad prostitutes, curtailed drug trafficking, thriving churches, and improved schools.

To return to the example of New York City, the effectiveness of the new tactics and problem-solving partnerships is clear. To begin with, public spaces were recovered, graffiti eradicated, Times Square revitalized, and mass transit rehabilitated. Following upon these achievements by many in New York City, Mayor Giuliani and former Commissioner Bratton reinvigorated the police department. Drops in crime were so precipitous that even skeptical criminologists had to acknowledge that something very dramatic had happened during 1994. Were improving economic conditions the cause? Unemployment never fell below 8.7 percent during Bratton's tenure. Was it new patterns of drug use? No change can be traced in New York City during the first half of the 1990s, when the initial and most spectacular crime reductions occurred. In fact, the NYPD adopted a theory of action, undertook complex organizational changes, and implemented new accountability and planning procedures—all focused on established public goals. A full account of this transformation has yet to be written, and recent tragic events, such as the Louima beating and Diallo killing, have obscured and even threaten New York's achievements.

Potential downsides

We are optimistic about the potential of prosecutors to assist communities in preventing crime in the future. But certain new issues must be faced. The old law-enforcement strategy, to its credit, restrained governmental abuse of power. By adopting a reactive stance to serious crimes, government avoided intruding too deeply into the lives of citizens and communities. Changes in policing and prosecution raise concerns about how such important values should be preserved. In recent years, prosecutors have gained enormous power independent of the movement toward community prosecution. Sentencing guidelines and mandatory sentencing laws that restrict judges' discretion have enhanced that of prosecutors. Prosecutors now adjust the charges—rather than judges adjusting the sentencing—to the idiosyncrasies of individual cases or offenders. Pros-
ecutors have gained increased control over repeat and violent juvenile offenders through state waiver provisions, and over those not court-involved through early-intervention programs that target at-risk youth.

The shift to community prosecution further empowers prosecutors by taking them into the traditional domain of police. They now have direct contact not only with offenders and victims but with residents and other users of the neighborhood. The prosecutor's expanded tactics increase his power over offenders through the use of nuisance abatement suits, restraining orders, and other civil initiatives that allow prosecutors, as well as police, to avoid burdens of proof and circumvent some constitutional protections that apply to criminal proceedings. Diversion programs, to which prosecutors refer low-level, nonviolent offenders, may serve to "widen the net" by bringing under court supervision greater numbers of offenders who would not have previously been prosecuted.

Other concerns arise as well. By working so closely with police and citizens, prosecutors might become overzealous. They might forget their obligation to protect the rights of those arrested and indicted. Current legal training does little to prepare prosecutors for problem solving; nor do law schools encourage students to become involved in neighborhood affairs. Will the development of closer collaboration with police departments reduce prosecutors' ability to confront police corruption and abuse? Will elected prosecutors be tempted to use their close link to communities for inappropriate political purposes? Will they be vulnerable to charges of being "soft on crime" if they too closely attach themselves to quality-of-life goals?

Safeguarding the role of "achieving justice"

Considerable effort will be required to prevent these lurking problems as prosecutors become increasingly involved in local communities. Although we have no ready-made solution at this time, we do not believe that a remote, professional criminal justice "system" that practically ignores citizen concerns is feasible any longer. Entire communities were abandoned to criminals in the name of "root causes," "individual rights," and "professionalism." But just as community policing
opened police departments to public scrutiny, community prosecution exposes the actions of district attorneys to review by citizens, local government, and other collaborating agencies.

In the past, prosecutors were virtually unaccountable. They had to survive election, but, except for egregious mishandling of cases, their work was hidden from the public. A decision not to proceed on a case could always be blamed on a poor police investigation in order to conceal attempts to maintain high conviction rates by prosecuting only the most airtight cases. But today, as a routine part of business, community prosecutors report to citizens and police why they took, or did not take, a particular course of action concerning a case or offender from a neighborhood, and what they plan to do next.

In addition to public exposure, guidelines regulating prosecutors' work—developed publicly and disseminated widely—could prevent abuses. One set of guidelines that we recommend would regulate agency relationships with communities. They would, like a charter, describe the values that underlie the collaborative relationship, the boundaries and limits of the collaboration, the principles governing citizen participation and representation, and conflict-resolution mechanisms. Another set of guidelines that we support would focus on civil initiatives by defining their purpose, the conditions under which they should or should not be used, the procedures for their use, and the potential for their abuse. While such guidelines will not answer all of the questions concerning this new form of prosecutorial authority, they will help to hold both prosecutors and communities accountable for their actions.

A new sense of excitement and optimism is enveloping crime-control efforts today. Old certainties have been overturned. Enthusiasm is growing as communities experience success in reducing crime. The gains that we have described are not in "easy" or "wealthy" neighborhoods; they have occurred in economically struggling neighborhoods with large minority and immigrant populations. Such achievements should not be lightly dismissed. Confident in the closer ties they have formed with police, and those that they are forming with prosecutors, citizens appear to be refusing to revert back to old strategies, or to allow police and prosecutors to retreat. This bodes well for the future of law enforcement and the safety and well-being of our citizens.