

Effect of BIDs on Violent Crime in Los Angeles

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SUMMARY

Over the past decade a number of programs have been implemented to reduce violent crime, including programs that aim to improve the social and economic conditions of local communities. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of business improvement districts (BIDs) in Los Angeles on violent crime at the community-level. BIDs are self-organizing, local public-private organizations that collect assessments to pay for local area service provisions and activities such as street cleaning, public safety, and place promotion.

DATA AND METHODS

A RAND research team was provided twelve years (1994-2005) of crime data from the Los Angeles Police Department. We present an analysis that compares the changes in crime patterns in 30 BID areas before and after their establishment. The analysis focuses on the associations between the adoption of a BID in an area and the change in the rate of several crime outcomes, with a specific focus on violent crimes that are most likely to be experienced by youth and young adults.

FINDINGS

The results from our analysis indicate that BIDs have marginal effects on reducing total violent crime rates, and *are associated with significantly larger than expected reductions in robbery rates*. The effects vary by location and appear to be strongest in BIDs that place a greater focus on public safety or have undergone significant economic development.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

One of the main strengths of the BID model is its localized governance capability where local actors, knowledgeable about local problems, can tailor a strategic response to the problems of economic development and crime. Policy makers seeking out the BID model as a driver for large-scale community revitalization efforts should recognize that most BIDs cannot facilitate such changes on their own. BIDs can help leverage existing city services and act as advocates for a more responsive local government to address issues of crime, infrastructure maintenance, and capital improvements.