

Crime & Safety in Keene, NH: A Geographic Analysis

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Tim would like to dedicate the efforts of this study to his family and the Geography Department.



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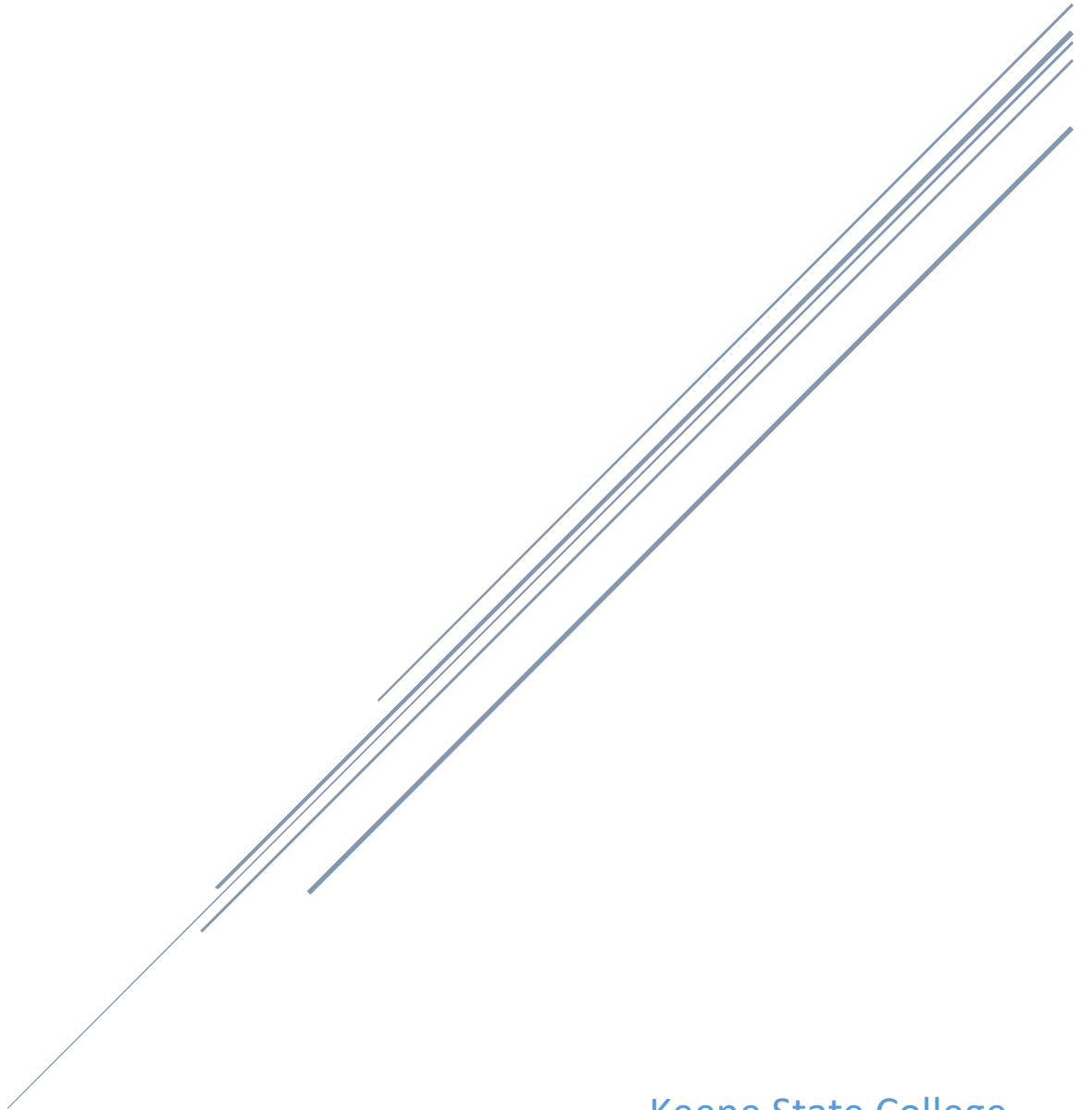
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction



Keene State College

Background

Citizens of cities and towns across the world depend on a feeling of safety as well as both a real and perceived lack of crime in order to feel truly secure in their environment. A sense of security can lead to greater productivity and a growing population within a given location. In contrast, feelings of insecurity can lead to population decline and corresponding decreases in productivity and livability. A goal of citizens in any society is to feel comfortable and secure on a day-to-day basis. Lack of security will always lead to societal concerns and demand for change. This is the case in many cities around the world, as well in Keene, New Hampshire.

According to the data provided by the Keene Police Department, the occurrence of crime in the City of Keene has been decreasing since the year 2013. Despite the decreasing occurrence of crime in Keene, the residents of the city do not necessarily feel safer. Three primary issues cause a sense of unease amongst the community of Keene (Figure 1.1). These factors are: the homeless population; panhandlers; and, the growing opioid epidemic that is affecting the entirety of the United States. The homeless population of Keene has increased since the year 2010 and has resulted in a heightened visibility of the homeless population along major roads and in some of the parks in Keene. Panhandlers are in a different category than the homeless population because some panhandlers in Keene are not homeless at all. This can make it hard to differentiate between who is and who is not in need of actual help. Panhandlers are reported to have become more aggressive over time, to the point that they are now considered a disturbance by many Keene residents. The opioid epidemic has hit especially hard in New Hampshire, as the state has the second highest opioid overdose rate in the nation. Regardless of actual trends, these factors have changed the public's perception of safety in the downtown area. The City of

Keene faces these three issues every day and is taking active steps to address concerns while providing assistance to a population in need.

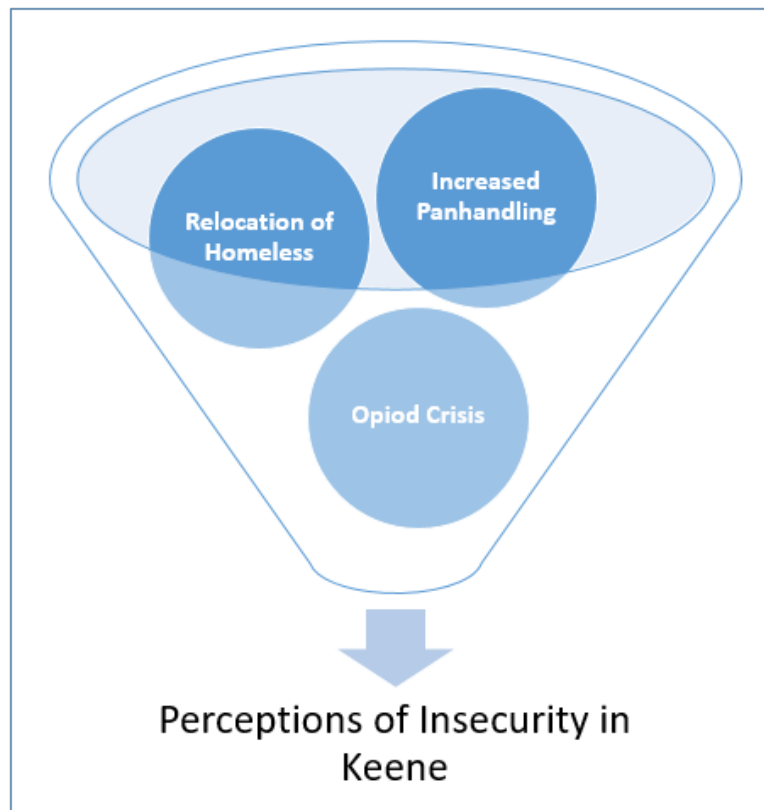


Figure 1.1 Perceptions of Insecurity in Keene

Reasons for Study

The purpose of this study is to collect information on why residents and regular visitors to the City of Keene may perceive the downtown area to be unsafe. The issue of perceived crime can negatively affect local businesses, overall livability of Keene, and local property values. Downtown shops have also been affected. The common denominator of all these concerns are the perceptions of downtown. Many locally owned businesses depend on the experience of a trip downtown that may be affected by a skewed perception of safety. Determining what changes need to be made in order to fix this perception is vital to the continued success of these shops and restaurants that serve as the heart of the city.

This study includes secondary research on cities that have faced similar issues and detailed primary research on the issues in Keene itself. Issues such as homelessness, how it is dealt with, and how it relates to crime are explored. Trends relating to the opioid crisis across the United States and in New Hampshire are also examined. To understand perceptions of crime in Keene, a survey was distributed to hundreds of residents and visitors that inquired about their experiences and perceptions of downtown. Findings from this original survey research is then compared to actual crime statistics in Keene.

Geographic Area of Study

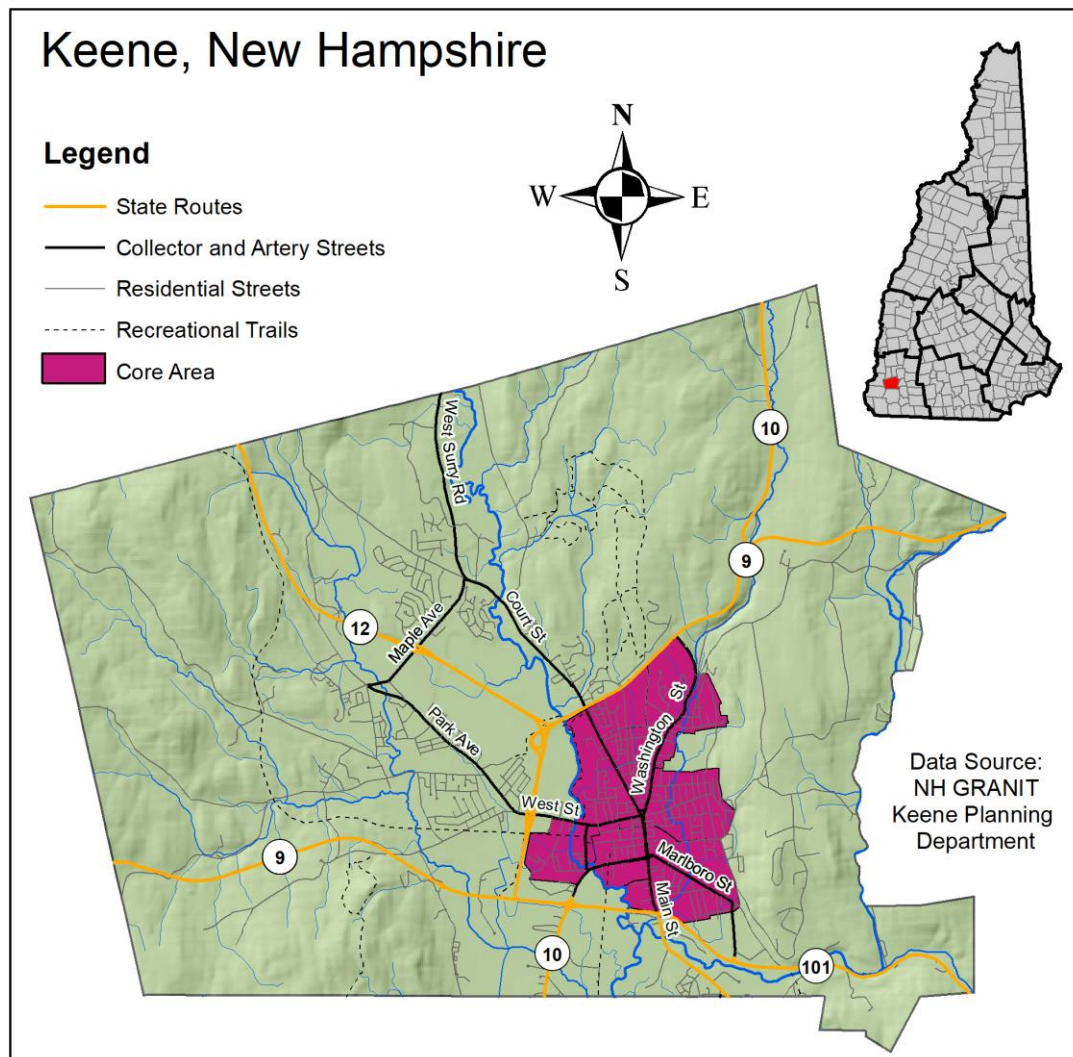


Figure 1.2 Map of Keene, New Hampshire

Keene is a relatively small city in southwest New Hampshire and is the county seat of Cheshire County. Visitors can get to the city by taking any of the four state routes that cross in Keene while cyclists and snowmobilers can use the Ashuelot Rail Trail or the Cheshire Rail Trail. Many of the city's residents live in the quintessential New England downtown with shops, restaurants, apartments, and churches lining Main Street. The city also includes many of the county's assets, such as the county jail, the county sheriff's office, and the courthouse. Keene State College is located downtown and is a large player in the community bringing in many jobs, community service hours, and patrons to local shops and restaurants.

For the purpose of this study, the core area as understood by the City of Keene is marked in purple (Figure 1.2). While this is a relatively small portion of the geographic land area, it contains the highest population density of the city. This area is home to many of the locally owned shops and restaurants and a large portion of the economy of Keene. Many college students and permanent residents live nearby on key streets such as Winchester Street, Marlboro Street, Court Street, and Washington Street.

Hypotheses

This study aims to determine not only where in Keene the most crimes occur, but also the locations which residents and visitors of Keene believe to be most unsafe, as well as determining what demographics feel the least safe in Keene.

Hypothesis 1: Railroad square is perceived as the most unsafe area in Keene

Hypothesis 2: Females feel less safe in Keene than males

Hypothesis 3: Younger people feel safer in Keene than other age groups

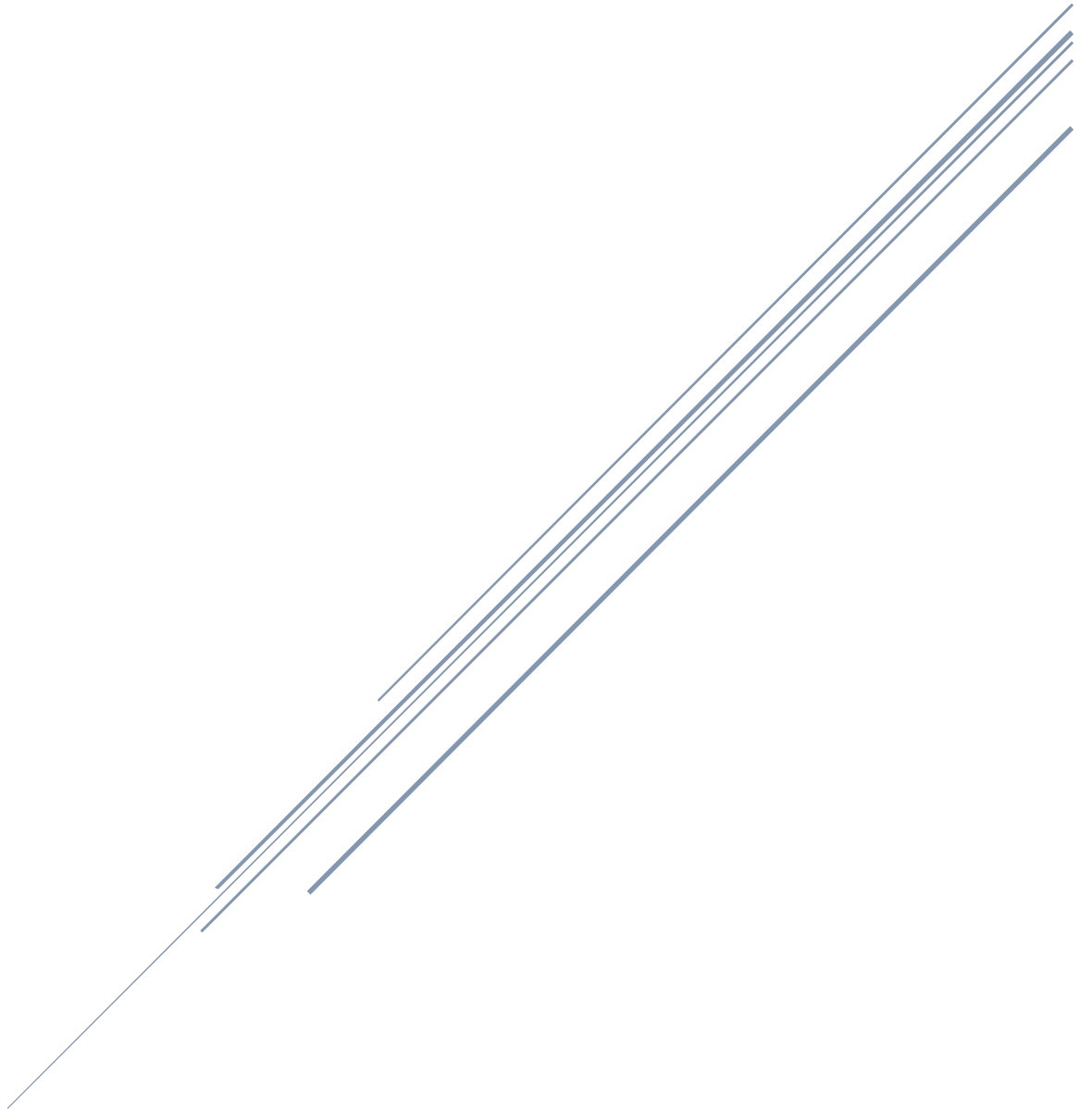
Hypothesis 4: Drug use is the principle cause of concern concerns for safety in Keene

Thesis Statement

The purpose of this project is to determine which areas of Keene are *perceived* as high crime areas in comparison to areas of Keene are *actually* high crime areas. The intent is to determine which areas of Keene may need more police presence due to the perceived crime in the area, and which areas of Keene need more police presence due to relatively high rates of crime.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review



Crime has been a factor in the day-to-day lives of people for millennia as humans have been in conflict with each other over various different issues. Crime can occur anywhere, from a small town with populations of less than 1,000 to the largest cities in the world. Crime can be committed by anyone, and because crime is a recurring problem people have been looking for ways to either reduce or eliminate crime entirely. In modern times there are a few new techniques to combating crime. Cities try to keep homeless off the streets using homeless shelters and increasing surveillance of areas through crime prevention through environmental design. These are some of the ways that the government strives to make the citizens and communities that they govern more safe and secure.

Safety and security are crucial for communities and the people within them to survive and prosper. So important that the famed psychologist Abraham Maslow lists them as the second tier of his hierarchy of needs, behind only basic human physiological needs (Figure 2.1). In essence, Maslow states that after food, water, and shelter, the next need that is required for a human or society to function properly is security in their daily functions. While seeking safety people look for factors that have made them feel safe or unsafe in the past. The issue with this human process is that in some cases people will perceive a place as dangerous when it may not be (Maslow 1943).

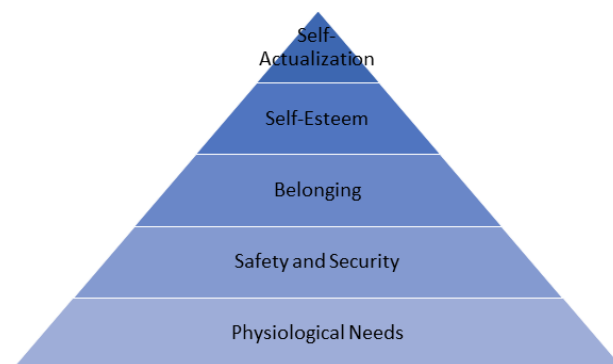


Figure 2.1 Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

When beginning to form a juxtaposition between where crimes actually occur and where people perceive to be the most insecure, it is crucial to define the elements of what makes people feel unsafe in a particular locale. This can be difficult because the definition of the word unsafe varies tremendously from person to person. Factors that might affect an area's perceived level of safety include; homeless population, lighting, building density, noise, drug activity, traffic, and police presence. A myriad of studies has investigated which of these topics affect populations differently. Different demographics have varied levels of perceived safety even in the same situation because safety in itself is subjective. To accurately identify what factors make people feel unsafe necessitates analysis of existing literature.

Homelessness and Crime in Small Towns

Homeless people are often considered as a cause of crime in cities around the world. Homeless people are often perceived as being mentally ill people with drug or alcohol problems, panhandling in the streets and loitering around popular areas in cities. Evidence of many past studies (Johnson et al. 2005; Pain and Francis 2004) suggests that the people most likely to be victims of crime are marginalized populations living in the most impoverished areas of cities and towns. As many are harmless, stereotyping homeless people is a rampant misunderstanding of most homeless individuals. The odds are stacked against people in this situation and many flaws in the system not only make it difficult simply to survive, but laws regarding the homeless population are complicated and often contradict each other.

A particularly questionable set of laws resides in North Dakota, where registered sex offenders are put in a situation where simply sleeping anywhere is illegal. As most states do, North Dakota state law states that registered sex offenders must tell local law enforcement when

they move to a new residence within three days of moving. However, law enforcement does not allow the homeless to spend more than one night in a single location. This means that sex offenders must notify local police of their movement every day. This immediately makes them violate another law that punishes sex offenders for not being able to hold a steady residence. Anyone who is a registered sex offender and homeless in North Dakota can be arrested for any one of three laws within days of becoming homeless (Donaher 2015).

For individuals that are not homeless and have never been, many of these challenges are unknown or the severity is severely misunderstood. This easily can create misconceptions between the general population and the homeless population of any city or town. Many people assume that in order to be homeless a person must be living on the streets with no roof over their head at all. In reality, there are many more ways to be considered homeless. In one study a person was found to be considered homeless if they had “housing difficulty (e.g. living with friends, in bed and breakfast, board and lodging or a hostel that does not offer a permanent home)” or if they are “roofless (e.g. rough sleepers and street homeless)” (Pain and Francis 2004, 97). Going by this definition a homeless person can range in appearance from an everyday college student to individuals who look like they have not seen the inside of a house in three weeks.

Homeless citizens “are widely viewed... as a threat to social order who commit crime and create disorder and discomfort among others” (Pain and Francis 2004, 98). This is a common opinion among both governing bodies and citizens alike. Crime is something in which many homeless people participate. People without homes often participate in begging and loitering, two crimes which are rarely enforced by police. Two crimes that the police do often enforce and is associated with homeless people are drug and alcohol abuse that can indicate larger problems

that are occurring in a city or town. The habits of performing these crimes is often something that homeless people pass on to others that end up joining their groups.

There has not been much study on the social organization of small towns across America, a key factor that may have an influence on the amount of and the type of crime occurring in towns. Low levels of social organization can lead to higher than average rates of crime in addition to creating feelings of division and alienation among community members. A study conducted by Chilenski, Greenberg, and Syvertsen in 2015 concluded that more crimes occur in areas of high economic risk, high rates of mobility, and a largely heterogeneous population. Towns that were perceived to be safe were those that had moderate to strong negative correlation with crime rates.

Some of the social disorganization that are important predictors of crime and juvenile delinquency in urban areas are also predictors of crime in rural towns. That being said, social organization does work differently in rural small towns than it does in urban areas. The following social organizations effect the amount of crime that occurs in small towns:

- o Less dense residential areas
- o Selective out-migration of highly educated young people
- o Likelihood of law enforcement to make an arrest when a crime is committed

Other factors that may influence the amount of crime occurring in small towns include the lack of anonymity that people have in small towns that may cause potential criminals to be discovered. An emphasis on privacy may also lead to criminals not being caught due to victims of crime keeping the fact that they were victimized to themselves.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

The overall condition of the areas or neighborhoods are large factors in safety for women and men in a community. Walking through a neighborhood with rundown buildings, dim lighting, low-income or homeless individuals hanging around public places can cause a feeling of fear. The stereotype of an unsafe neighborhood is consistent across all demographic groups. Mothers and fathers are a very large part of the population that “fears” specific neighborhoods. When mothers or fathers have a fear of a certain area or neighborhood, this could cause implications for not just the parents but also to the child. When parents fear a specific part of town they may avoid that portion of town altogether, causing an inconvenience for the parents, child, as well as any businesses that may be in or around the surrounding area that has been declared “unsafe”.

There are two primary ways that towns and cities try to reduce the amount of crime that is associated with homeless populations; homeless shelters and crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED). As urban homelessness becomes a growing problem, many cities have tried to use these two solutions to try to relieve some of the issues that occur due to homeless populations. Los Angeles has long been a big proponent of urban shelters. “Concomitant with attempts to clear homeless people from the streets of Los Angeles there has been a rapid growth in the urban shelter system, with the number of emergency beds in the region increasing by no less than 20 percent between 1996 and 2000” (Johnsen and May 2005, 788). Whether shelters are something that helps homeless people in their day-to-day lives is unknown as there has been no comprehensive study as to what part shelters play in a homeless person’s life. The largest provider for homeless people are not-for-profits such as churches who do the charity work because they believe that it is their moral duty. Many people work to help

homeless populations as volunteers and many former social workers end up developing “their own voluntary or charitable organization to redress gaps in existing service networks” (Johnsen and May 2005, 791). All types of shelters vary in how they are operated, that being said all shelters provide basic services that meet the everyday needs of homeless people and some shelters even provide additional services such as signposting.

In contrast to the provision of homeless shelters, CPTED not only tries to reduce the places that homeless people can stay, it also seeks to reduce crime in areas that have a high crime rate and prevent crime in areas with a low crime rate. The city of Sarasota, Florida, used environmental design to reduce crime in the part of the city known as the North Trail (Carter, Carter, and Dannenberg 2003). Methods used included such design choices as planning the placement and design of all future physical features in a way that would maximize visibility, making more activities available to the public so that there would be more eyes for surveillance of the area, and lighting that provides nighttime illumination.

Lighting is incredibly important in increasing the perceived safeness of an area whether it be on the street or in a home. Painter and Farrington (2001) of the Institute of Criminology at the University of Cambridge conducted a study on street lighting effect on crime reduction. The study utilized four sampling sites, two where the amount of lighting had been recently increased and two that remained unchanged to serve as control groups. These sites were paired in the same neighborhoods and their crime levels were measured for one year. The sites that received additional lighting saw significant decreases in crime, in one case a decrease of 641 crimes saving the population of that area an estimated £558,415. The total cost of the new lighting in the same neighborhood came out to £55,000, which means that the residents received a ten to one return

on investment. With the only changes to the area being the lighting, this study helps support the original hypothesis that additional lighting can improve safety in a residential or commercial area.

While continuing to consider lighting as a means of CPTED it is important to know where and what type of lighting should be implemented. The Illuminating Engineering Society (IES) is an authority in the lighting world and has conducted extensive research on which types of lights are most effective in increased perception of safety. In March of 2017, the IES published an article written by Greg Ortt regarding the many intricacies of lightings effect on safety. Ortt explains that additional lights may not make a person feel safe if they are not positioned correctly or they are not the right temperature of light. The temperature of light is measured in degrees kelvin. The lower the number the more yellow the light appears, the higher the more blue. When determining what temperature lights to use in an outdoor environment Ortt looked at preference gathered in previous studies and discovered that 4100k light is perceived to be the safest temperature. This is due to 4100k being the closest to a neutral white light, which allows the human eye to see most effectively. A temperature of 2000k provides a yellow light that can make it difficult to differentiate between colors in a dark environment, which can cause issues when trying to identify possible threats.

Detecting these threats is crucial to feeling safe and secure while traveling through a foreign place. There has been a multitude of research that has been conducted on what types and how much visibility is needed for a person to feel safe (Painter and Farrington 2001; Panek et al. 2016; Peeters and Vander Beken 2017). It is suggested that maintaining and limiting plant growth around lights and commonly traveled spaces will increase the perceived safety of a given area. There should be no plants or structure above two feet and no tree canopy below six feet

(Ortt 2017). Limiting and monitoring tree growth around lights is necessary because leaves can interfere with how the light is cast over its intended area.

Peeters and Vander Beken (2016) delve deeper into the relationship between crime, visibility, and CPTED. This study reveals that a house with an entrance shielded from visibility is 43% more likely to be broken into than those without. These findings continue to support their assertion that locations with reduced visibility are more likely to experience criminal activity. "It is believed that the dense vegetation facilitates crimes by providing an ideal concealment for potential criminals" (Deng 2015, 38). However, some researchers however argue that vegetation actually reduces crime in areas. Trees promote social activities which increases informal surveillance on public property. Deng then proposes a concept that he calls "cues to care" these cues being good maintenance and management of an area, as well as strong social organization and neighborhood behavior which promotes good community health. The final reason is that trees can reduce mental fatigue. When mental fatigue is reduced, so are aggressive behaviors and impulsive crimes (Deng 2015).

The reality of the effects of trees and vegetation on crime rates is varied. In areas with large amounts of tall trees violent crimes are less likely to occur due to trees reducing the mental fatigue of people which leads to less impulsiveness. Property crime was also reported at a lower rate in areas with large amounts of large trees than it was in areas with no vegetation. However, crime tended to propagate in areas that had lots of vegetation and were largely abandoned, such as empty lots and abandoned buildings. Ultimately crime rates in areas that are at least partially foliated are usually determined by the space between trees and not the types or sizes of trees in the area.

Sound, or lack thereof, can cause people to perceive a threat by subliminally triggering an anticipation of threat that may or may not exist. This paradigm was tested by examining people's level of perceived safety in public spaces across Europe and the United States with and without synthetic ambient sound. Some examples of these public spaces are shopping center parking structures in Paris and U.S. and subway stations, as well as video simulations of those areas. The supplementation of different kinds of non-threatening noises via public address (PA) systems are found to influence higher level of perceived safety (Sayin et. al. 2015). The sounds most effective are 'positive' animal and human vocal sounds rather than silence or instrumentals because they create a perception of greater social presence. This social presence allows subjects in these public areas to feel safer because humans feel security within groups. Even when the subjects were made aware that these sounds were fabricated they continued to feel safer in these areas. It is hypothesized that the perception of increased social presence may also dissuade criminals from committing these crimes as well.

CPTED experts have to know how to reduce crime as they are planning city design. For that reason, CPTED "experts frame crime-related risks in three interconnecting ways" (Parnaby 2006, 2). The ways that these experts frame crime related risks are:

- Examining what crimes might be committed in an area and where those crime might occur in the area.
- Making the logic behind CPTED depoliticized and resistant towards complaints of its use.
- Making the application of CPTED the moral, ethical, and civic responsibility of the client.

CPTED is fundamentally changing an environment physically and socially to reduce crime and improve overall community health.

Crime on College Campuses and the Clery Act

It is important that crimes on college campuses are well documented and reported so parents and perspective students have the ability to make their own decisions regarding the safety of learning institutions. The FBI collects crime data on all U.S. Institutions of Higher Education and creates public reports that are published in print and online. These records are required to be collected and published by each learning institution as well, due to the 1990 Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act or the Clery Act.

The Clery Act was prompted by the rape and murder of Jeanne Clery at Lehigh University in 1986. The reason that this terrible event prompted the creation of this act is because after it had occurred an investigation led to the discovery of numerous crimes that the college had not reported to its current and perspective students (The Clery Center 2016). It was suggested in the case that if these crimes had been made public knowledge, Jeanne Clery and other students that had been victimized would not have attended the school. The parents of Clery won a lawsuit against the school and created a new security group on the campus. The case was brought to the U.S. government with strong sentiment that these violent crimes must be public knowledge for the safety of higher learning institutions. An important aspect to note is that the law was passed as consumer protection, therefore private as well as public institutions must publish their crime statistics.

The Clery Act utilizes FBI *Uniform Crime Reporting* (UCR) definitions. The UCR provides standards for the information recorded by U.S. law enforcement when a crime is reported or an arrest is made. It also classifies crimes into two categories violent or property, along with

definitions of each crime within either classification (Noonan and Vavra 2007). Crimes that are considered violent can be seen in Figure 2.2 and property crimes can be seen in Figure 2.3

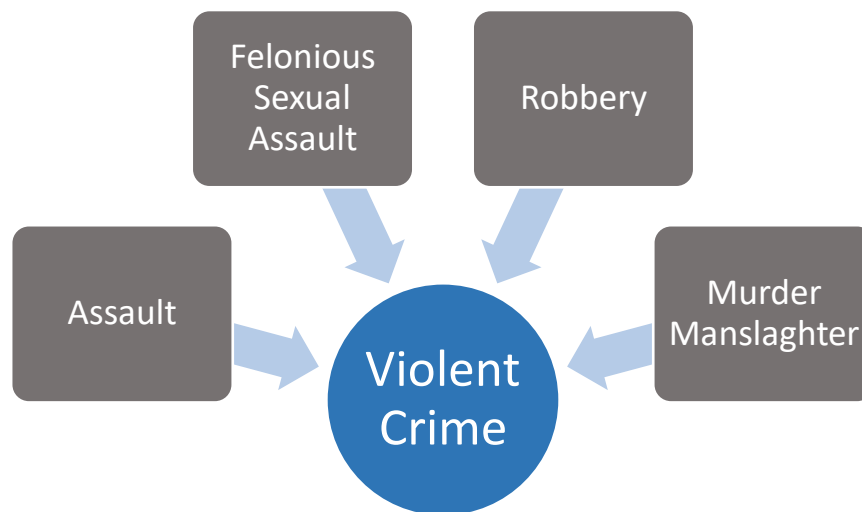


Figure 2.2 *The crimes that the UCR designates as violent crime*

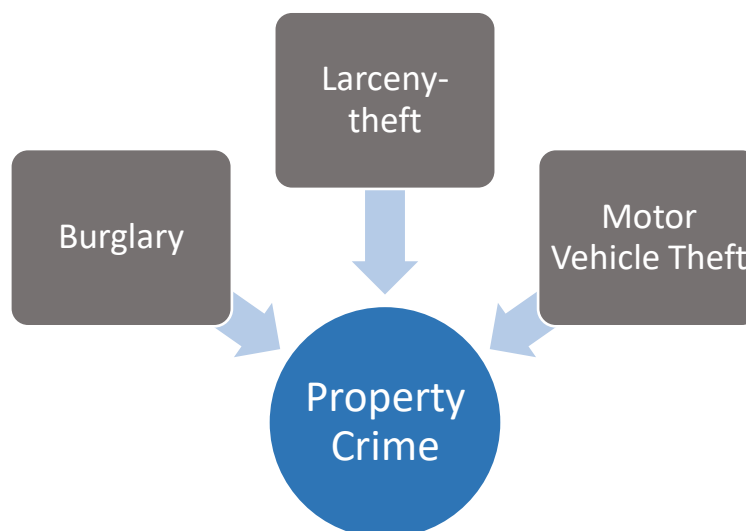


Figure 2.3 *The crimes that the UCR designates as property crimes*

These regulations are crucial to documenting crimes because it sets strict definitions for each crime, there is no room for questions for the crimes it lists. The Clery Act and the UCR together form an informative and powerful report that when published yearly allow for trends to be displayed and analyzed. They allow for a simple experience when trying to uncover crime statistics about a particular institution.

Studies have reported that college women are at a greater risk of certain forms of victimization in comparison to other demographic groups (Jordan 2014). “Previous research has shown the prevalence of females on college campuses across the nation experiencing a generalized fear of being victimized or violently assaulted while on campus. This fear is generated by the knowledge of violent crimes towards women on campus, as well as the perception alone that there are assaults happening on campus” (Miles 2015). According to the United States department of Justice Women are victimized far more than men in many different categories. Every type of crime listed by the Department of Justice has a higher number of female victims than male victims. The types of crime listed are stalking, rape, sexual assault and domestic violence (Catalano, et al. 2009).

Due to the fact that the statistics show women are more victimized than men this puts a fear inside the head of a woman. Men do not have the same fear as these crimes are far less problematic for the male population. Women around the world are more likely to be victims of sex crimes such as rape, sexual assault, and sexual harassment and women know that studies have reported that college women are at a greater risk of certain forms of victimization in comparison to other demographic groups (Jordan 2014).

The overall condition of the areas or neighborhoods are large factors in safety for women and men in a community. Walking through a neighborhood with rundown buildings, dim lighting, low-income or homeless individuals hanging around public places can cause a feeling of fear. The stereotype of an unsafe neighborhood is consistent across all demographic groups. Mothers and fathers are a very large part of the population that “fears” specific neighborhoods. When mothers or fathers have a fear of a certain area or neighborhood this could cause implications for not just

the parents but also to the child. When parents fear a specific part of town they may avoid that portion of town all together, causing an inconvenience for the parents, child, as well as any businesses that may be in or around the surrounding area that has been declared “unsafe”.

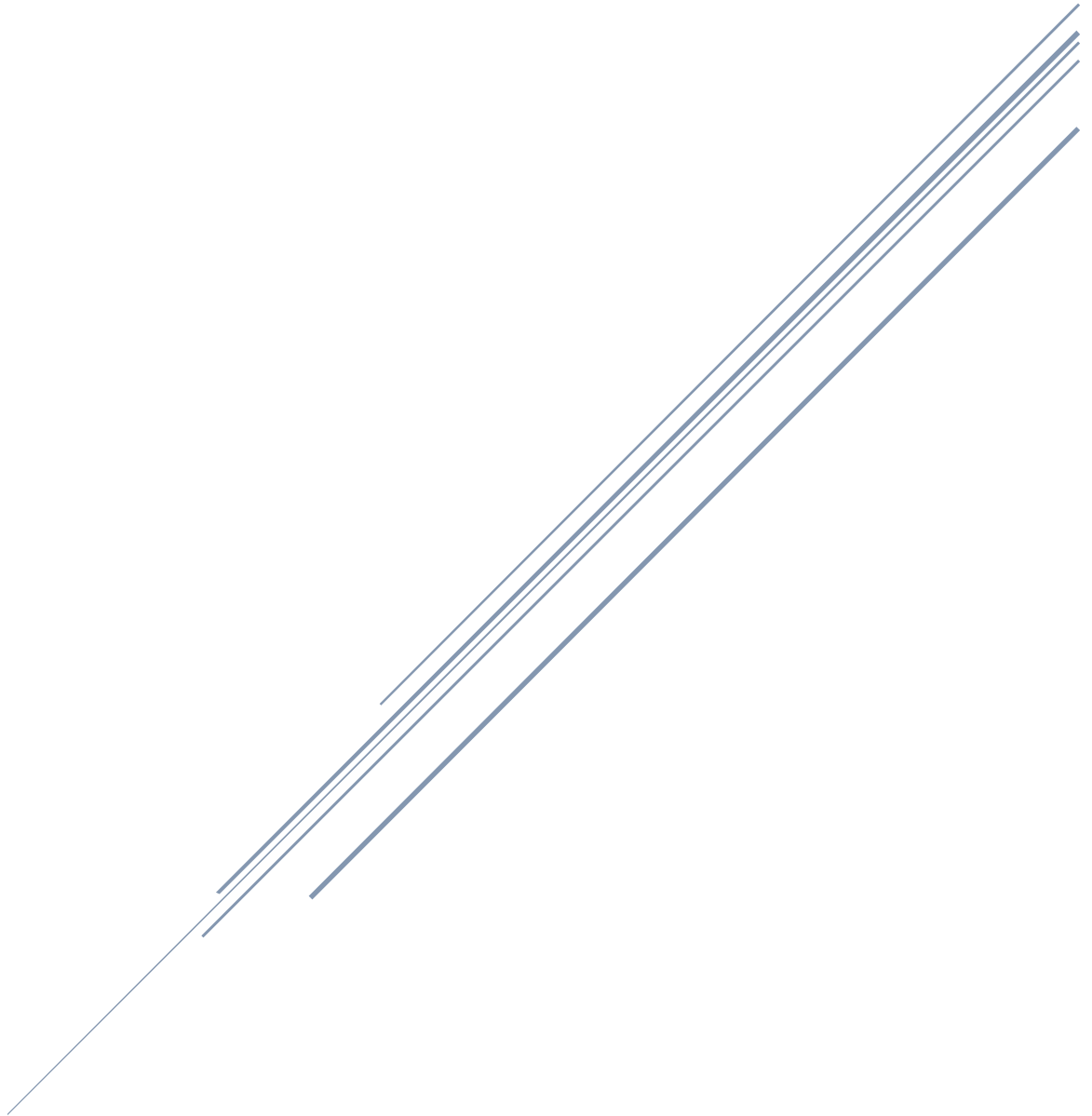
According to the RAINN every 98 seconds an American is sexually assaulted. Over 54% of those victims are ages 18-34 (US Census Bureau 2016). On top of this, one in six women are raped or sexually assaulted in their lifetime and 90% of all rape victims are female. Women ages 18-24 who are college students are three times more likely than women in general to experience sexual violence. Females of the same age who are not enrolled in college are four times more likely (RAINN 2017). The statistics given here state that females are far more vulnerable to violent sexual crimes than males, which mean that females are socialized to be afraid of crime, therefore will perceive crime in far more areas than the average male. Due to the fact that small college towns have a high population of 18-24-year-old women, it is understandable how females would feel unsafe in a place that is not necessarily declared unsafe.

Summary

Crime and safety are two different topics that are related to one another. People feel safer in areas where there is little to no crime and less crime occurs when an area is designed to be safer. Feelings of safety can be influenced by the gender or age of a person and the current locale of a place. There are ways to improve the safety of an area and to keep homeless people from inhabiting an area. One of the most popular ways to make an area safer is through CPTED which aims to reduce the amount of crime that can take place in an area by increasing the visibility in certain areas or by reducing the number of places that criminals can temporarily reside. This can lead to a safer community by reducing the amount of crime taking place.

CHAPTER 3

Background



Nestled in the Monadnock Region lies Keene, New Hampshire. A town noted for its traditional New England charm and one devoted to the well-being of its residents. Keene is home to Keene State College, Antioch University, and River Valley Community College. A stroll along Main Street shows Keene's historic past. Central Square, the most recognizable feature of downtown Keene, is a public park enjoyed by Keene residents every day. As the site for leisure, protest, or even a simple photograph, Central Square has served as the city's heart for generations. The Colonial Theatre on Main Street also portrays the historical essence of the area. Keene is also a popular destination in the Fall for leaf peepers and other naturalists. This aspect of Keene is supported by a large amount of vegetation that is found on Main Street, with several trees and various types of vegetation. Along with the vegetation the paved features of Main Street are also beautifully maintained and are easy to use to navigate the city.

Demographics of Keene

Keene is the largest city in southwestern New Hampshire with a 2016 population of 23,403 residents. The population has essentially flatlined; decreasing six residents from a population of 23,409 in 2010. This exemplifies population stagnation, as between the years 2000 and 2010 the population of Keene grew from 22,589 to 23,409 residents. The overall trend of the population of Keene can be seen in Figure 3.1 which shows the population trends of Keene per decade from 1970 to 2015. In this graph the most significant population growth can be seen between the decades 1980 and 1990, followed immediately by the largest population drop between the decades 1990 and 2000. As the population continues to stagnate the population will most likely age.

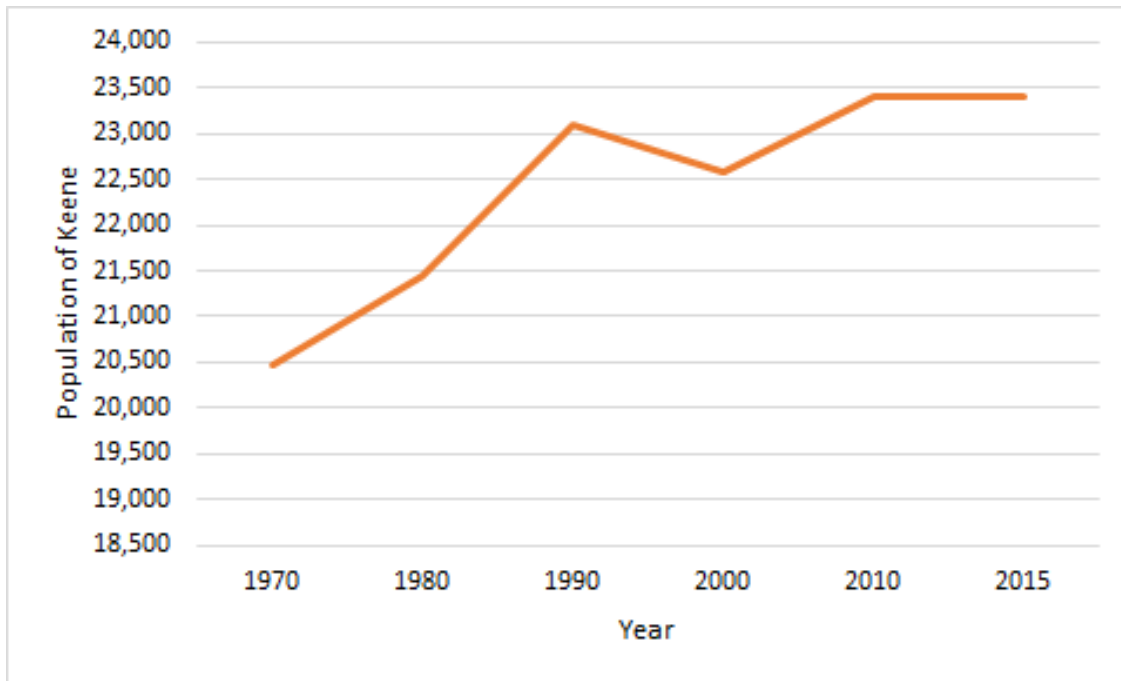


Figure 3.1 Population trends of Keene

The overwhelming majority of the population is White with 22,314, or 96%, of the total population being Caucasian. Only 1,089, or 4% of residents, are of an ethnicity other than Caucasian. The largest ethnic minority population in Keene is the Asian population with 474 residents. The second largest minority population are people of two or more ethnicities, of which there are 325 people residing in Keene. There are only 144 African Americans in all of Keene, not including people of two or more races.

The dominant age groups of the residents in Keene are people that are 15 to 24 years old and comprise approximately 26% of the total population (Figure 3.2). This is due to the fact that Keene is home to Keene State College, Antioch University, and River Valley Community College. Demonstrating Keene's aging population, the next largest age group is that of individuals aged 75 and over. The steepest decline in population that is not related to people graduating from college and leaving to find full time jobs, is of the male population past the age of 64. The 60 to 64 age group makes up an estimated six percent of the male population while the 65 to 69 age

group makes up only 3.5% of the male population. The female equivalent of this is the population past 69 years old, with the 70 to 74 age group making up an estimated 2.9% of the female population compared to the 65 to 69 age group that makes up 4.9% of the female population.

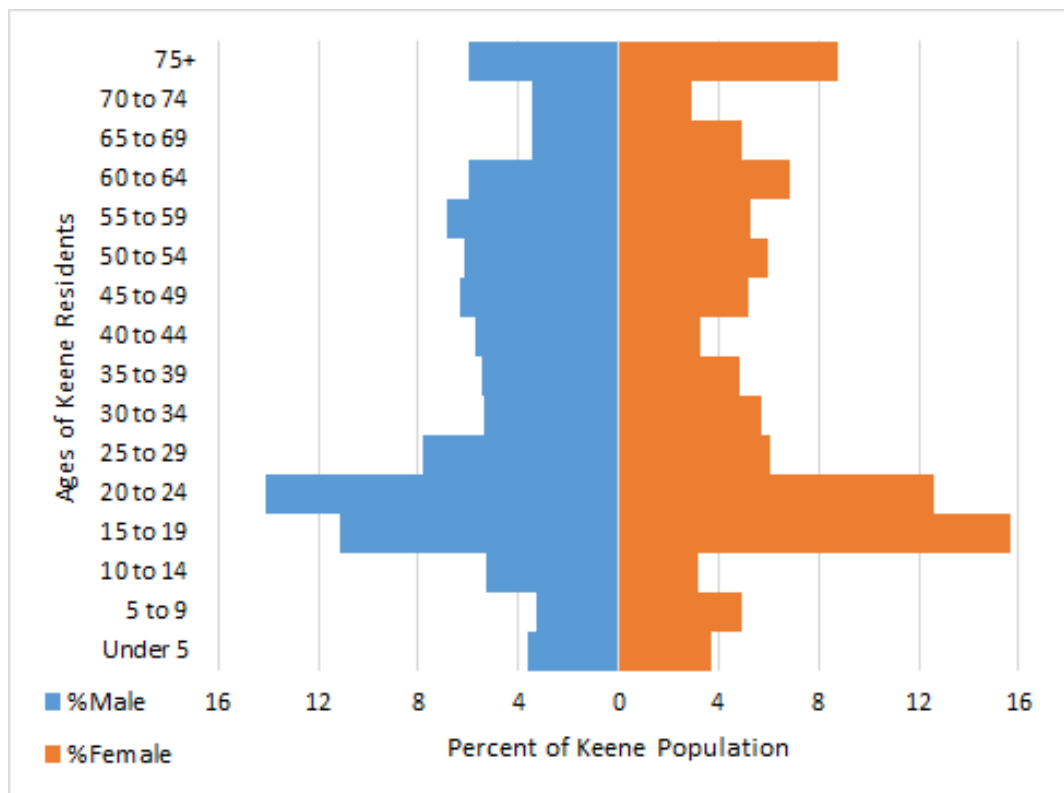


Figure 3.2 Population pyramid of Keene, New Hampshire

Keene has a fairly even split between family households and non-family households, as 4,843 households are family households while there are 4,209 non-family households in Keene. A family household is any household that either has a husband and wife, or an adult and at least one child that is related to the adult. In Keene there are two common types of non-family households, those that have the owner living alone and those that are composed of college students. Of the households where the owner is living alone, about 1,149 are people over the age of 65. These people living alone could lead to an increase in the amount of crime in an area as these households could be considered easy targets. Alternatively, these households could

lead to an increase in perceived crime, as elderly people may feel more threatened by others. Family households make up 54% of all households in Keene while nonfamily households make up 46% of all households in Keene.

Out of all the residents of Keene, 93.3% have graduated from high school and 40.3% have graduated from a college with a bachelor's degree or higher. The Keene public school system currently provides education for approximately 4,156 students across four elementary schools, the Keene Middle School, and Keene High School, all of which operate under School Administrative Unit 29 (SAU29). SAU29 maintains 14 school buildings with an \$84.3 million dollar budget that it uses to employ over 1,000 people.

New Hampshire as a state has a high school graduation rate of 92%, while 35% of New Hampshire citizens have graduated from a college with at least a bachelor's degree. As evident via Figures 3.3 and 3.4, the United States as a whole has high school graduation rate and college of 87% and 30% respectively (American Community Survey 2016). This means that Keene has a high rate of education with higher than average high school graduation rates and college degree acquisition rates. These statistics bode well for the city, as higher rates of education generally correlate with lower rates of crime.

Economy of Keene

The major employers in Keene employ over 6000 people, with the top four employers employing 4831 people (Figure 3.5). There are 12,204 people in Keene's workforce. Of those 11,699 are employed and 505 are unemployed, leaving the unemployment rate at 4.1%. In 2005 these numbers were a bit different with 12,027 people in the workforce and an unemployment rate at 3% (New Hampshire Employment Security).

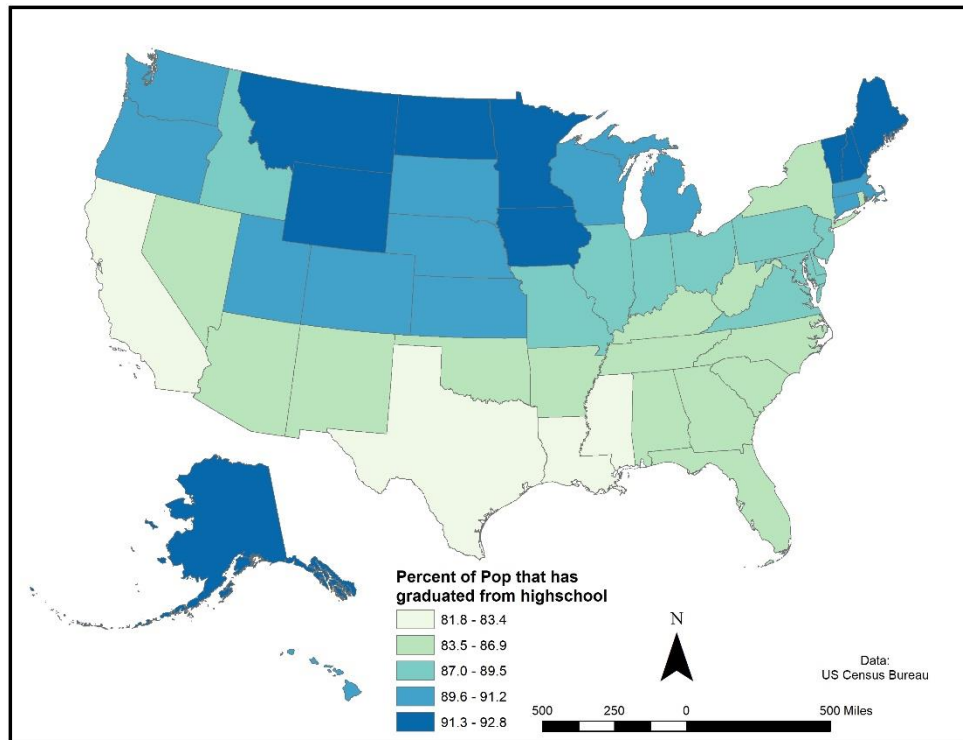


Figure 3.3 Map of U.S. high school graduation rates by state

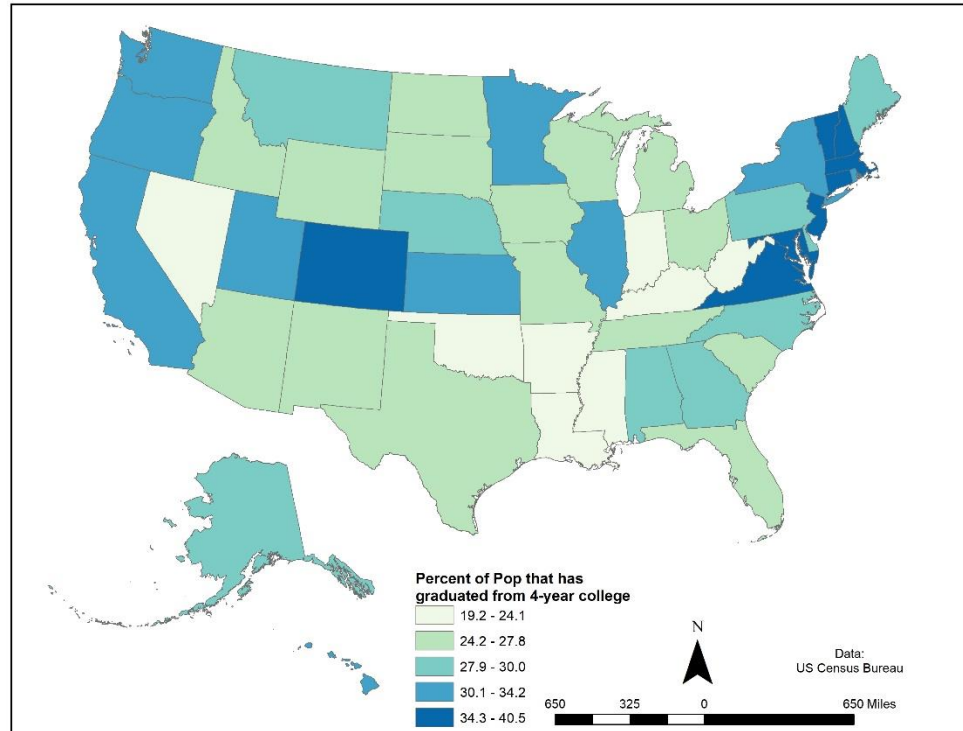


Figure 3.4 Map of U.S. college graduation rates by state

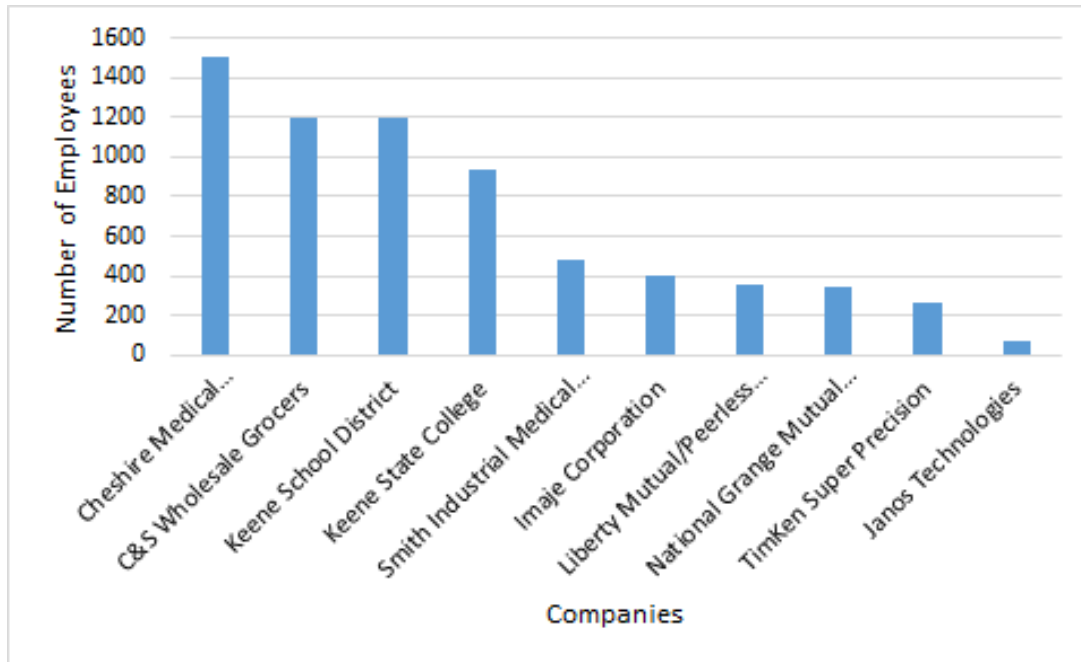


Figure 3.5 Major employers in Keene, NH

The minimum wage in New Hampshire is \$7.25 an hour. This means that if a person works a 40-hour work week every week for a year then that person will earn \$15,080 per annum. This is a significantly lower amount of money than a person working for minimum wage in neighboring states. Massachusetts has a minimum wage of \$11.00 per hour, Maine has a minimum wage of \$9.00 per hour, and Vermont has a minimum wage of \$10.00 per hour. In these three states, a person would make \$22,880, \$18,720, and \$20,800 a year by working a 40-hour work week every week respectively. Despite this comparatively low minimum wage, the state of New Hampshire has a poverty rate of only 8.9%. This is a lower poverty rate than the overall 2016 U.S. poverty rate of 12.7% (U.S. Census Bureau). Cheshire County, the county within which Keene is located, has the second highest poverty rate of any county in New Hampshire with an 11.8% rate of poverty (Figure 3.6). Only Coos County, with a 14.1% poverty rate, is higher. The city of Keene itself has a poverty rate of 17% (Figure 3.7).

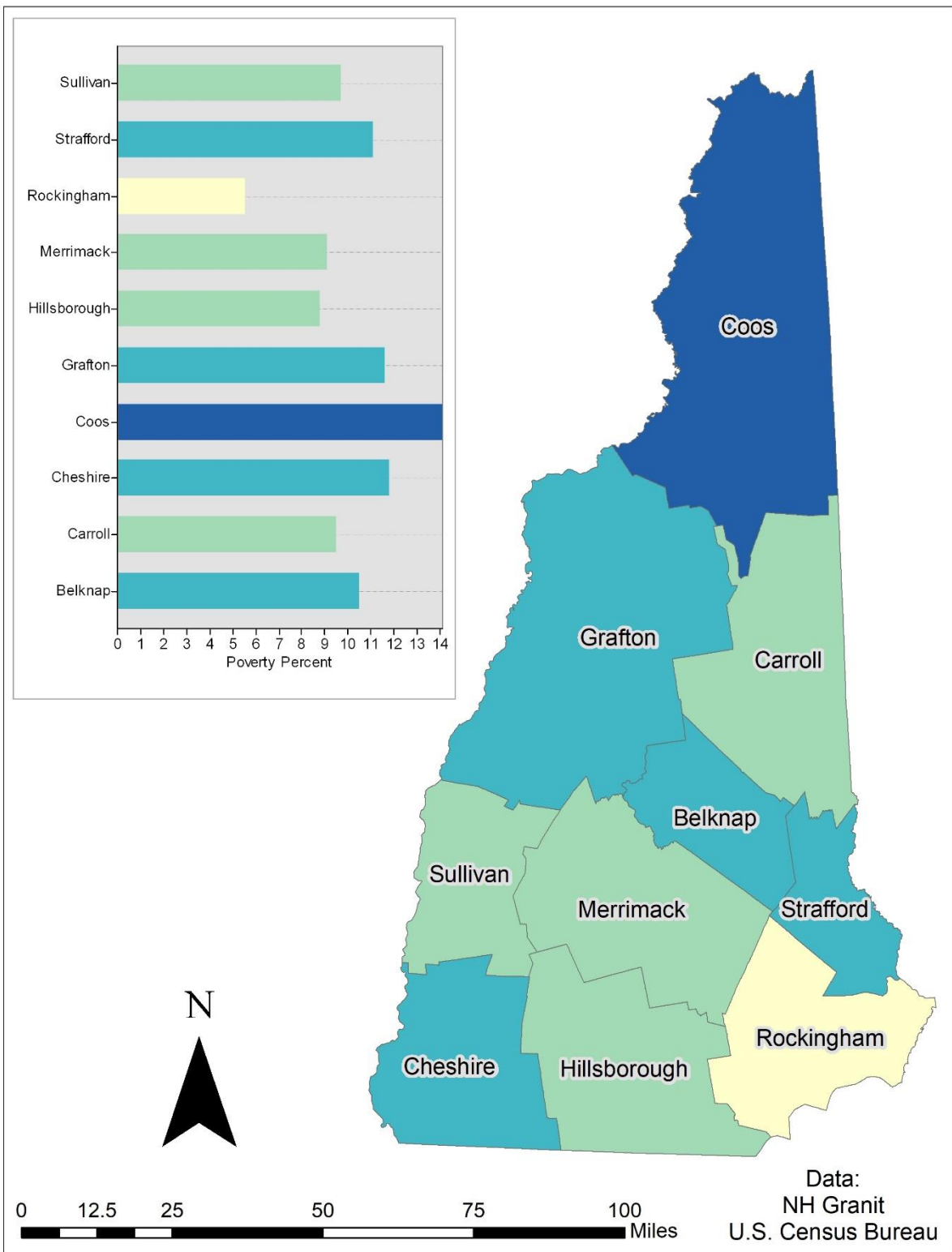


Figure 3.6 Poverty in New Hampshire Counties

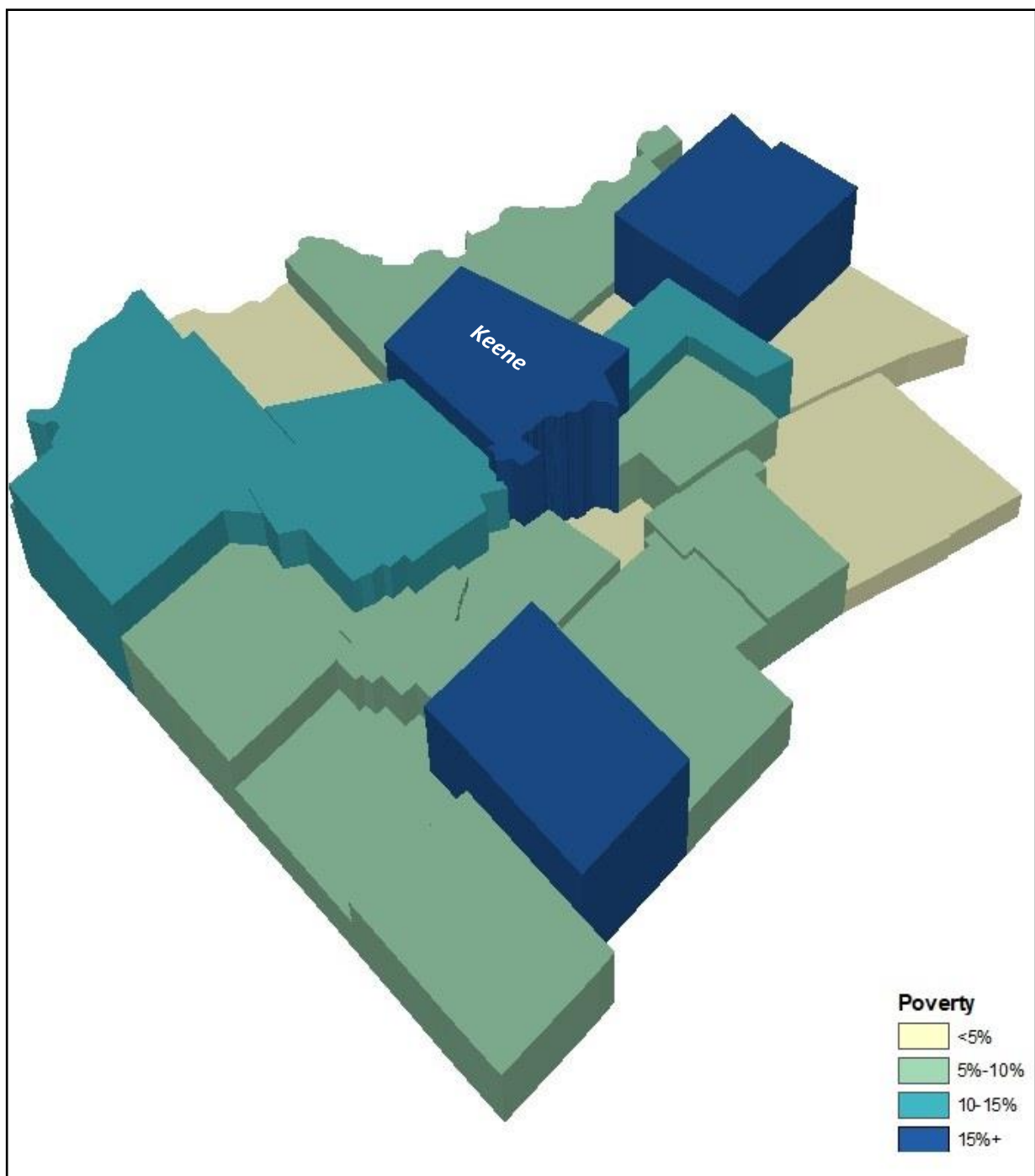


Figure 3.7 Poverty in Cheshire County

While this is the highest rate in the county, Keene also provides the overwhelming share of social services and as such attracts those of limited means. Furthermore, Keene's poverty rate seems unusually high until other towns that are home to colleges such as Durham (24.5% poverty rate) and Plymouth (22.4% poverty rate) are also considered. To help residents that are living in poverty and that are in need, Keene has several services that it provides to the public. These services include financial assistance, food resources, housing assistance, mental and developmental health services, medical and dental services, transportation assistance, and utility assistance. The government runs some of these services while volunteer organizations or private companies operate others.

There are three organizations that a resident of Keene can contact in New Hampshire in order to receive financial assistance. These three organizations are the City of Keene Human Services Department, the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, and New Hampshire Employment Security. The Keene Human Services Department helps residents of Keene pay their rent, helps residents avoid having their electric disconnected, provides prescription medication to those who need it, and help residents of Keene heat their houses during the wintertime. The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services offers temporary assistance to needy families, aid to permanently and totally disabled persons, old age assistance, food stamps, and child support enforcement services. New Hampshire Employment Security offers unemployment compensation to all citizens of New Hampshire.

The city also provides some housing options for the homeless. Facilities designed to house the homeless in Keene include places such as the Keene Family Shelter, the Keene Single Shelter, and Hundred Nights Inc. Hundred Nights Inc is open from mid-November to mid-April.

Hundred Nights Inc has several different purposes, including a cold weather shelter, an open doors resource center, and providing food for the homeless (Figure 3.8). The cold weather shelter is open from mid-November to mid-April and has 26 bunk beds available to use. Tenants must check into the shelter between the hours of 6:45 P.M. and 9:45 P.M. and have to leave by 7 A.M. The shelter is a reminder of the delicate balance being played out in Keene as the city attempts to reconcile those in need with perceptions and occurrences of crime.



Figure 3.8 Hundred Nights homeless shelter photo. **Source:** Authors

Keene has a human services page on its website that provides contact information for organizations that provide people with financial assistance, food resources, housing assistance, utility assistance, and health services. These services range from government run programs to non-profit organizations. Most can be found in the city of Keene although additional

organizations are found in other New Hampshire towns and some of the government run programs, such as the Social Security Administration, are operated out of the state entirely. The locations of the human service providers in Keene can be seen in figure 3.9. It can be easily seen that most services provided are located within or immediately adjacent to the core area of Keene.

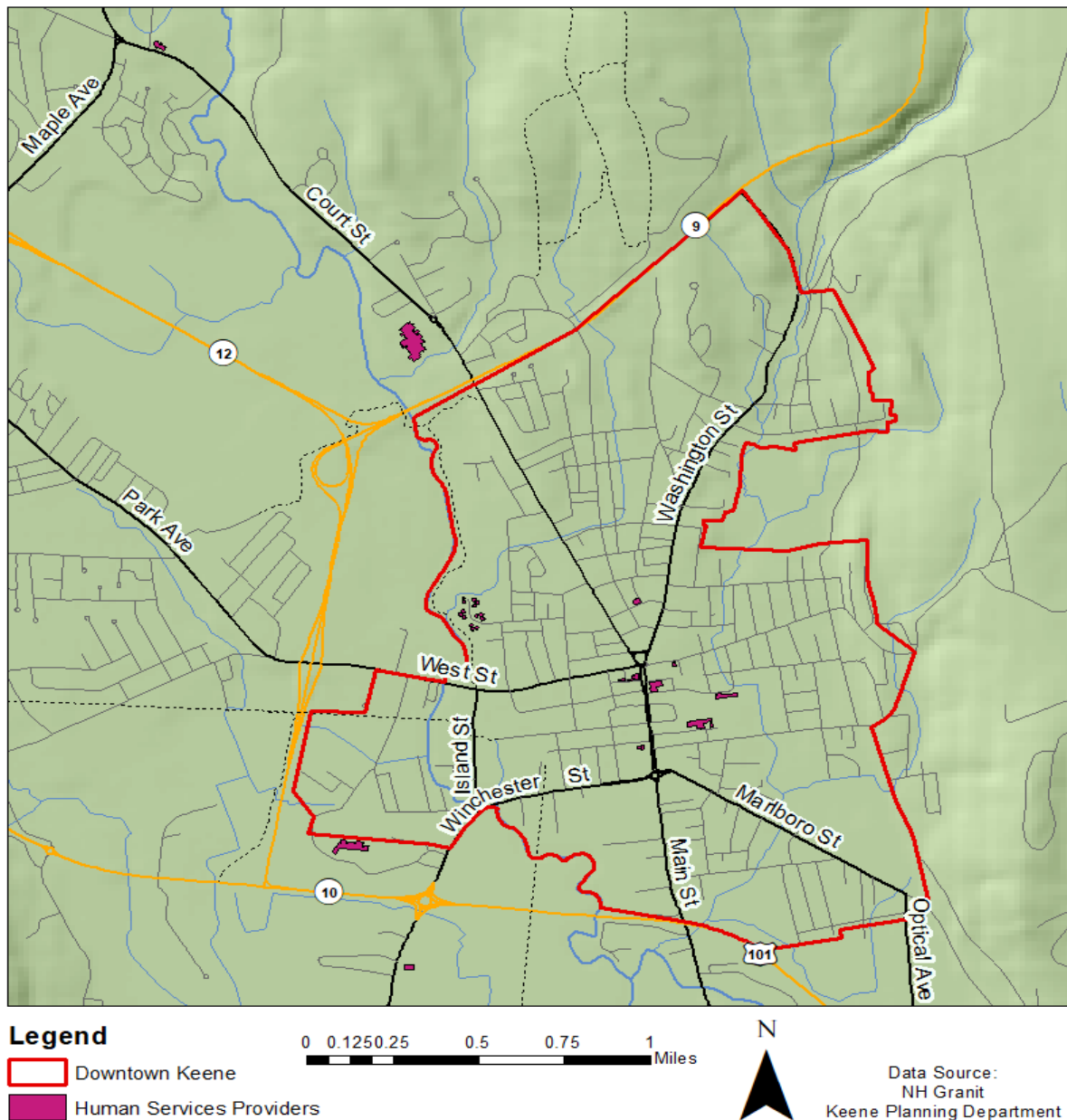


Figure 3.9 Location of Human Service Providers in Keene

Keene State College

Keene State College is a relatively small college located near the city's downtown area. The college is one of the city's largest employers, and the student population is housed both on campus and off. While the blocks around the college are heavily populated with students, off-campus student housing can be found throughout the downtown area. The college was founded in 1909 and has some historic buildings on its campus.

According to Steven Goetsch, the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management at Keene State College, the student population is comprised of mostly of young adults from New England, eastern New York, and northern New Jersey, about half of whom are first-generation college students (Goetsch 2017, Personal Interview). Many students will live off campus during their third and fourth years at Keene State College due to interest in more independence and an abundance of available off-campus housing. Keene State College requires all students to attend an off-campus housing orientation before they move off-campus. Students living off campus have been known to cause distractions and be disturbances for the residents of Keene. This causes conflict as college students may at times end up committing crimes on and to other people's property.

Of full time students, the college is about 44% male and 56% female. It has a 75% acceptance rate, and retains 75% to 82% of first year students. The 50% four-year graduation rate is better than the average public institution in the United States, which is 30% (Goetsch 2017, Personal Interview). Admission is currently lower than normal, which is not uncommon for numerous colleges in the northeast. Current Interim President Melinda Treadwell is forming a strategic enrollment task force with upper administration to increase enrollment over the next

five years. A new target population is the Hispanic population in New Hampshire and surrounding states. Though many would be first generation students, the college is used to this type of student. Partnerships with YMCAs and other community centers to attract these potential students, as this is a critical part of the 5-year plan that will start affecting incoming classes as soon as the Fall semester of 2018.

Opioid Crisis and Crime in the United States

Opioids are a class of drugs that act on the nervous system to relieve pain. Long-term use can lead to physical dependence and withdrawal symptoms when stopped. Opioids are classified as narcotics and include illegal heroin as well as legal prescription pain relievers such as morphine, codeine, methadone, oxycodone, hydrocodone, fentanyl and hydromorphone. You might know them better by their trade names: OxyContin, Percodan, Percocet, Vicodin, Lortab, Norco, Fentora, Dilaudid and others (Hoback 2016).

Opioid use as well as drug addiction and crime are closely linked. Crimes that the public may associate with substance abuse could be things such as robbery, fraud, or theft. There are three different types of drug and alcohol related crimes:

- The first type of crime, alcohol and substance defined means that an individual violates the law by selling, using, manufacturing, or distributing alcohol or a controlled substance.
- Alcohol and drug-related are the second type of crimes. These crimes include individuals who decide to violate the law for money to pay for drugs. An example of this could be stealing from family members, or hurting other individuals in order for that person to give the individual money.
- The third type of crime is Lifestyle. This can be classified as individuals who live a lifestyle that keeps them in the eye of crime, whether that be poverty, or drug addiction. These people cannot promote a life without crime (New Beginnings Drug Rehab 2017).

The United States as whole is afflicted with this opioid epidemic, there is not a state that has not experienced an opioid related death. Figure 3.10 shows the U.S. Opioid death rates by state. It is important to note that West Virginia and New Hampshire have the highest opioid death rates in the country.

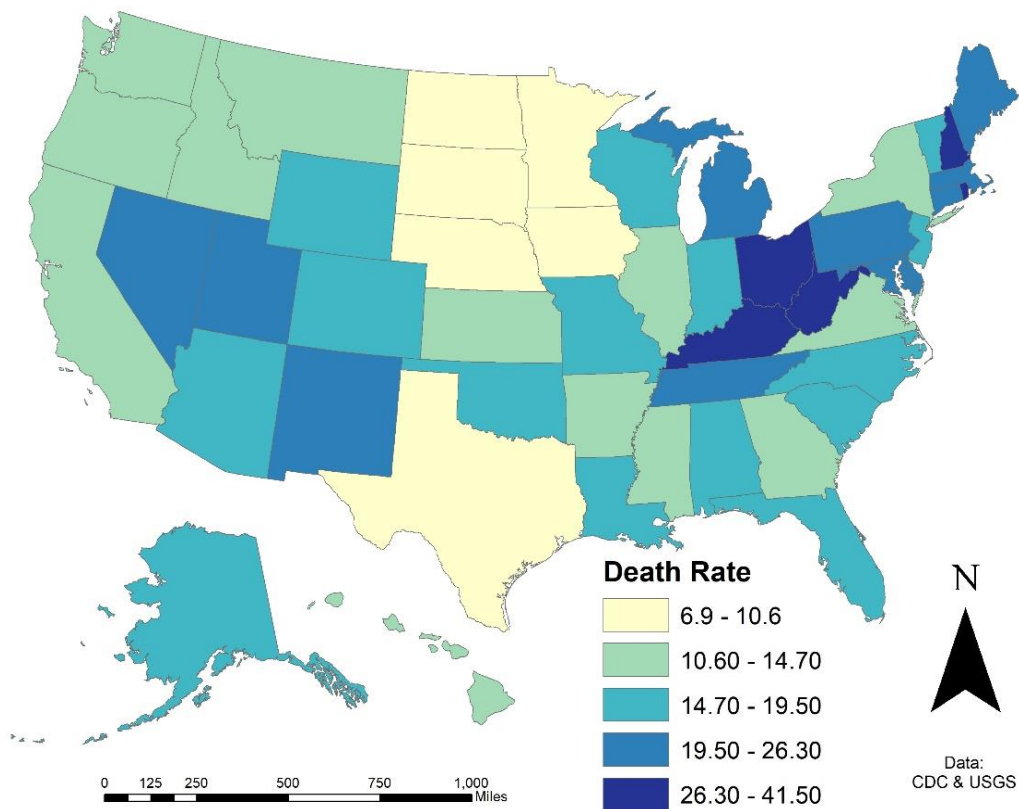


Figure 3.10 Opioid deaths per 100,000 people in U.S. States, 2015

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, New Hampshire is one of the highest in the country for illicit drug use. In New Hampshire, 91% percent of all overdose deaths are related to heroin and opioids. The rate of substance use in young adults is 10.5% higher than that of the average of New England states (New Hampshire Department of Health And Human Services).

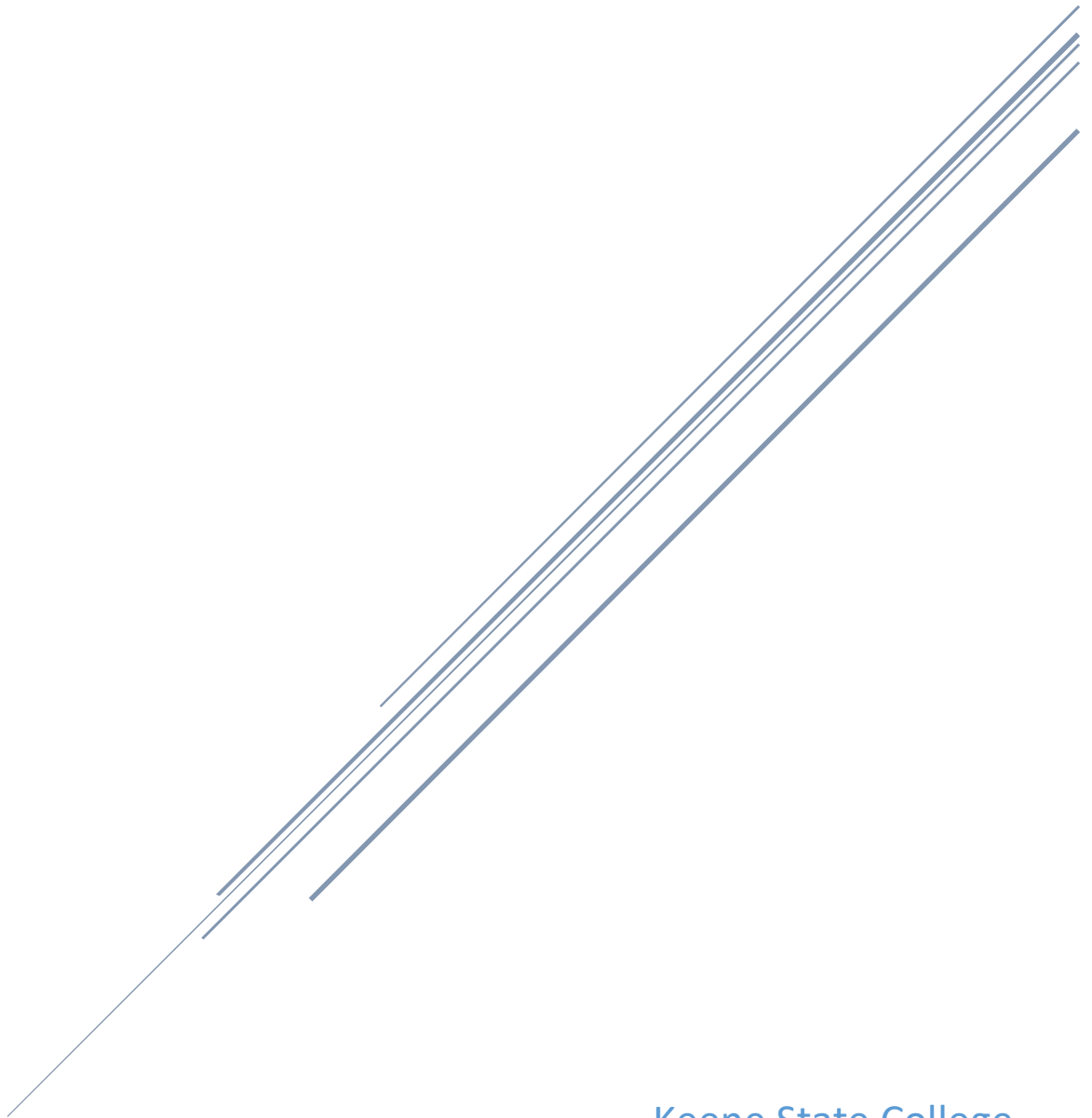
Summary

Keene is a relatively small city located in Cheshire County, New Hampshire, and just like any city, it experiences crime each year. Most crimes committed in Keene are property crimes, which are primarily crimes such as vandalism or theft, although violent crimes do also occur within the city and have demonstrated a slight increase in frequency. Keene is also home to

Keene State College which experiences crime each year as well, although the most frequent crimes reported on the campus are drug and alcohol possession crimes. Opioid abuse is also a problem in Keene as well as most of New Hampshire as the state had the second most opioid related deaths of any state in the United States with 478 confirmed deaths due to overdosing on opiates in 2016. Keene is using programs to combat the use of opiates in the city to reduce the amount of deaths that occur because of the drugs and to give the city a better image.

CHAPTER 4

Existing Condition



Keene State College

New Hampshire is the second safest state in the Union with only Vermont, a neighboring state, being safer according to the USA.com crime index. With a violent crime rate of 197.6 violent crimes occurring per 100,000 people, and only 2,637 violent crimes being committed in the entire state, New Hampshire has one of the lowest rates of violent crime in the United States. As a result, many people consider New Hampshire to be a quaint little state full of cute small towns and nice people. (Figure 4.1) Despite this, New Hampshire, just like any other state, has cities that are considered dangerous. Keene is considered one of the more dangerous towns in New Hampshire; the question is whether or not it deserves this title. Moreover, relative rates of crime must always be taken into consideration, as towns perceived as “unsafe” may actually be amongst the least crime infested in the Union.



Figure 4.1 *Calm Central Square at night. Source: Authors.*

Crime in the City of Keene

In 2014, Keene was identified as the seventh most dangerous city in New Hampshire (FBI 2014) and the fifth in 2016 according to an article in the Keene State College *Equinox*. The ten

most dangerous towns in New Hampshire during the year 2014 can be seen in Table 4.1. Both Keene and Hanover are college towns that have large populations of young people living and high rates of poverty. In Keene, the infamous ‘Pumpkinfest’ riots took place in 2014. The two largest towns in New Hampshire, Manchester and Nashua are also represented on the list, being the first and ninth most dangerous cities in New Hampshire respectively.

Table 4.1 *The top ten most dangerous cities in New Hampshire 2014.*

Town	Violent Crime Rate
Manchester	619.5
Somersworth	562.4
Laconia	423.9
Rochester	406.8
Claremont	292.7
Conway	279.9
Keene	273.4
Lebanon	255.2
Nashua	233.7
Hanover	211.7

Figures 4.2 and 4.3 represent property and violent crimes in Keene over a 10-year span. The FBI Uniform Crime Reporting defines the types of crime included in these two categories. Starting in 2007 a slight upward trend is visible until both reach their greatest amounts of crime in 2013 with property crimes peaking at 1,373 and violent crimes at 485. After 2013, there is a large decline in crime as both cases dropped to their lowest levels in 2015 at 723 and 291 for property and violent crimes respectively. However, in 2016 the levels of both crime increase slightly. A potentially contributing factor for the decrease in crime is the recent decline in enrollment at Keene State College. Fortunately, the vast majority of crimes associated with KSC Students are not violent, with by far the most often offenses being drug and alcohol related (Keene State College Department of Campus Safety 2017).

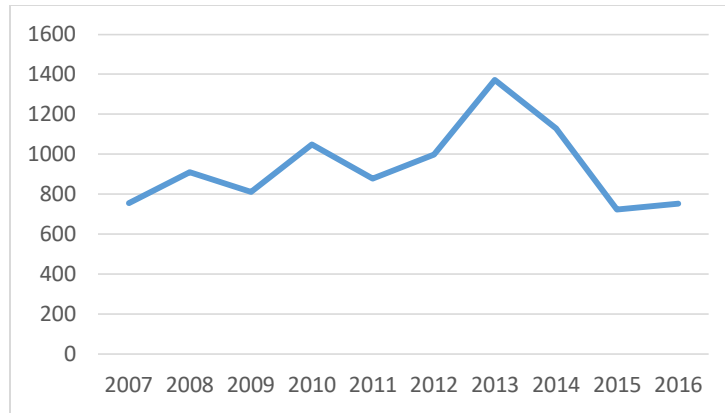


Figure 4.2 Property crime occurrences in Keene, NH 2007 to 2016

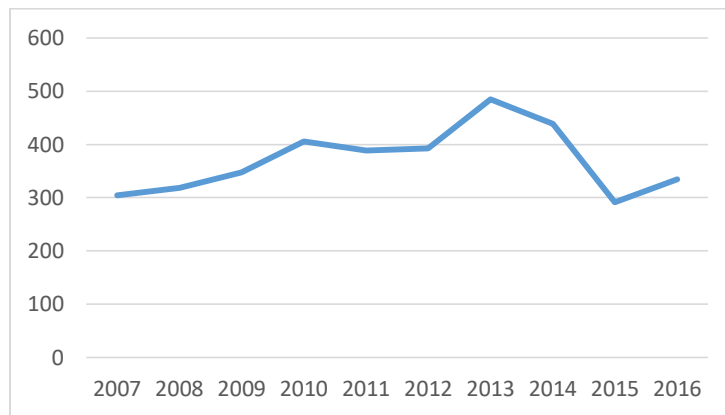


Figure 4.3 Violent crime occurrences in Keene, NH 2007 to 2016

When analyzing the yearly data, it is important to know the amount each type of crime contributes to their category. These crimes can cause fear in the public so it is crucial to know which types of crime are most prevalent in the community. It would make a difference to the public if all of the violent crimes were murders versus a combination with robbery or assault. Figure 4.4 and 4.5 provide a visual representation of the composition of each category over a 10-year span. Figure 4.4, displays the number and type of property crime occurring in Keene. It is clear that larceny-theft, the unlawful taking of personal property with intent to deprive the rightful owner of it permanently, accounts for a majority of the category at 8,053 or 86.2% of the total 9,345. Of the other crimes, burglary accounts for 1,146 or 12.3% and motor vehicle theft accounts for 146 or just 1.5%. Figure 4.5 displays violent crime has a total of 3,606 crimes. It can

be seen that assault, with a count of 3,207, accounts for the significant majority of all violent crimes at 88.4%. Second and third are robbery and felonious sexual assault that account for 254 or 7.3% and 141 or 4.2% respectively. The last category of violent crime is murder/manslaughter that constitutes < 1.0%, with just five murders over the course of a decade.

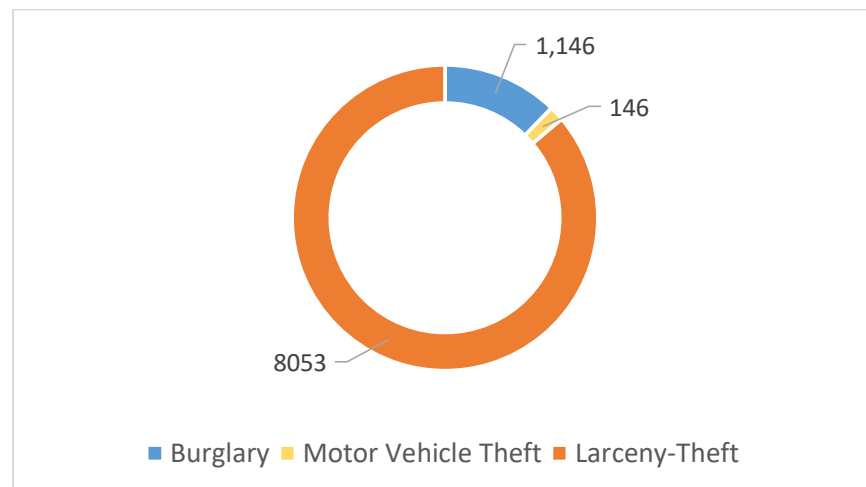


Figure 4.4 Property crime in Keene: 2007-2016

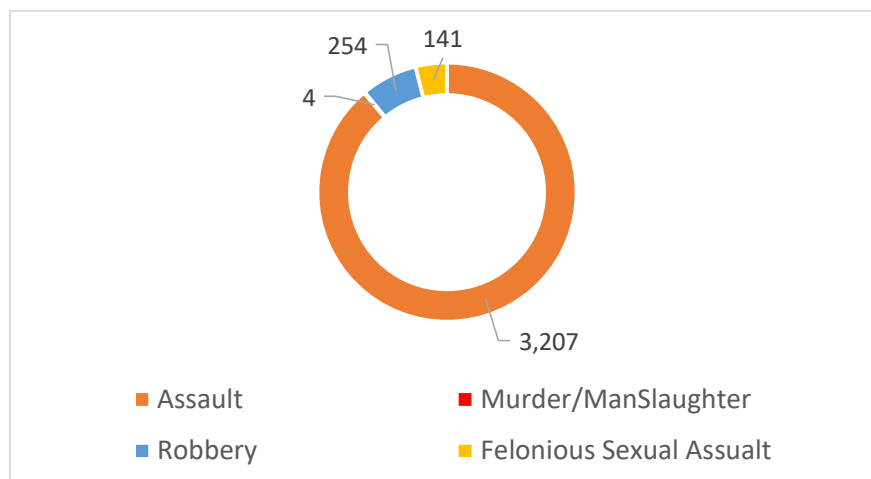


Figure 4.5 Violent crime in Keene: 2007-2016

When analyzing the amount of crime in Keene it is important to remember the population of the city and that these figures are aggregated over 10-years. Location data for crimes from 2007 to 2017 were made available to this project by the Keene Police Department with assistance from Will Schoefmann in the Keene Planning Department. The location data were

converted into point density maps to display the concentrations of each type of crime in Keene to protect specific locations of crimes.

All crimes listed above, as well as open container violations and overdoses, are displayed spatially in Figure 4.6 and 4.7. Nearly 70% of crime in Keene occurs in the core area of Keene, which includes the West Street Shopping Center and the Riverside Plaza. This core area is defined by the city and is outlined in Figure 4.6. The rest of the maps representing crime in Keene are focused in this downtown area per the request of the Keene Police Department as well as the high percentage of crime that occurs there (Figure 4.7). These areas are also the most densely populated section and most trafficked in Keene. It is not uncommon for areas with higher populations and greater traffic to experience a greater amount of crime as there are more people around these locations to become victims. It is also important to note that this figure includes crimes that have occurred on the campus of Keene State College. On-campus activity can sequester a large amount of KPD resources and is responsible for a considerable amount of crime in Keene, generally in the form of underage of underage drinking.

In fact, KSC sees no more crime than other colleges of comparable size and demographics. The college also sees less stalking and domestic violence than other colleges, which Kemal Atkins, VP for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management as well as recent Interim Director of Campus Safety, believes may be because of certain initiatives put in place. Repercussions for such crimes are clearly spelled out in the college's Code of Conduct. In addition, Atkins believes the generally wholesome community at KSC does not necessarily attract that type of behavior (Atkins 2017, Personal Interview).

14,219 Total Crimes 2007-2017
3.9 Crimes Per Day

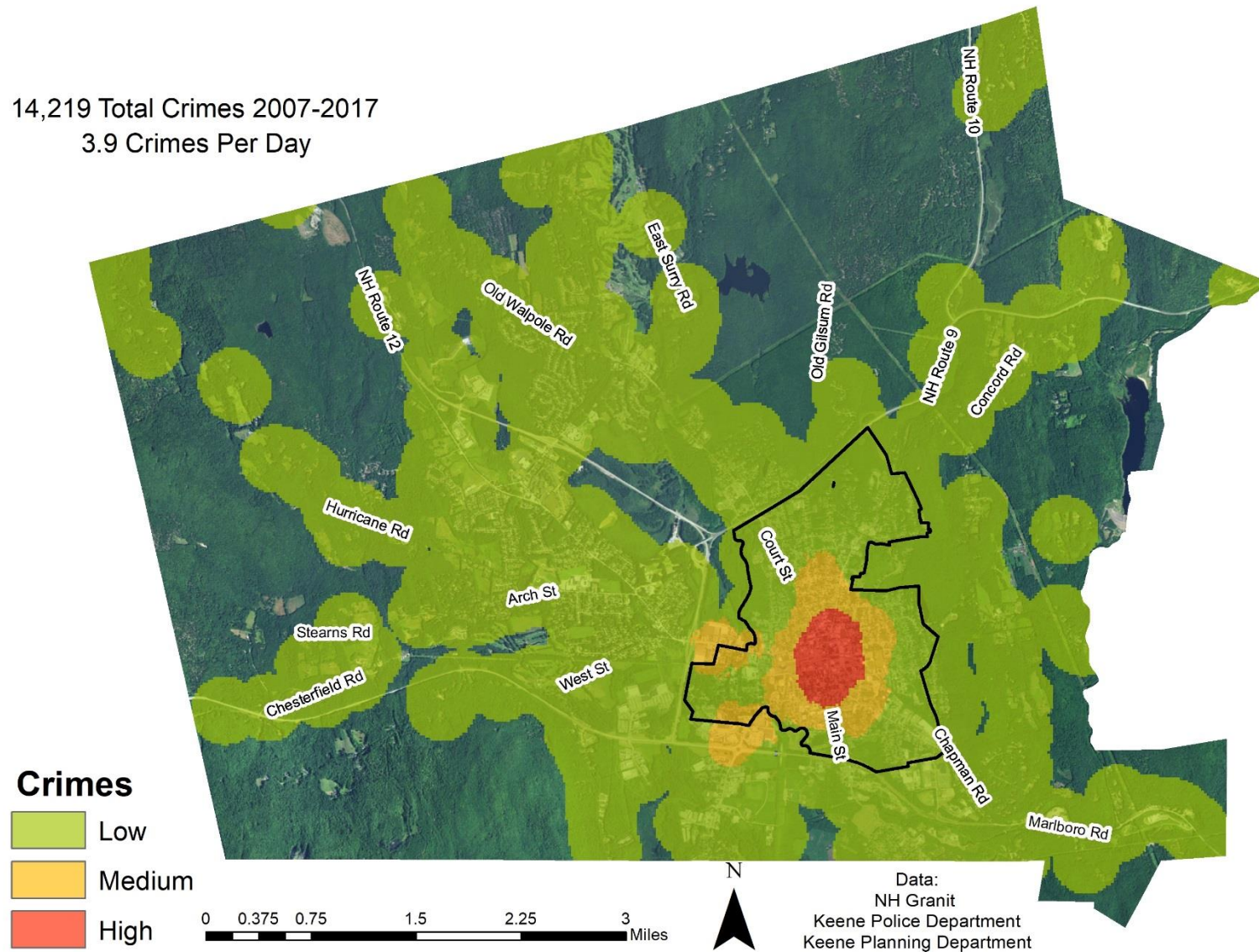
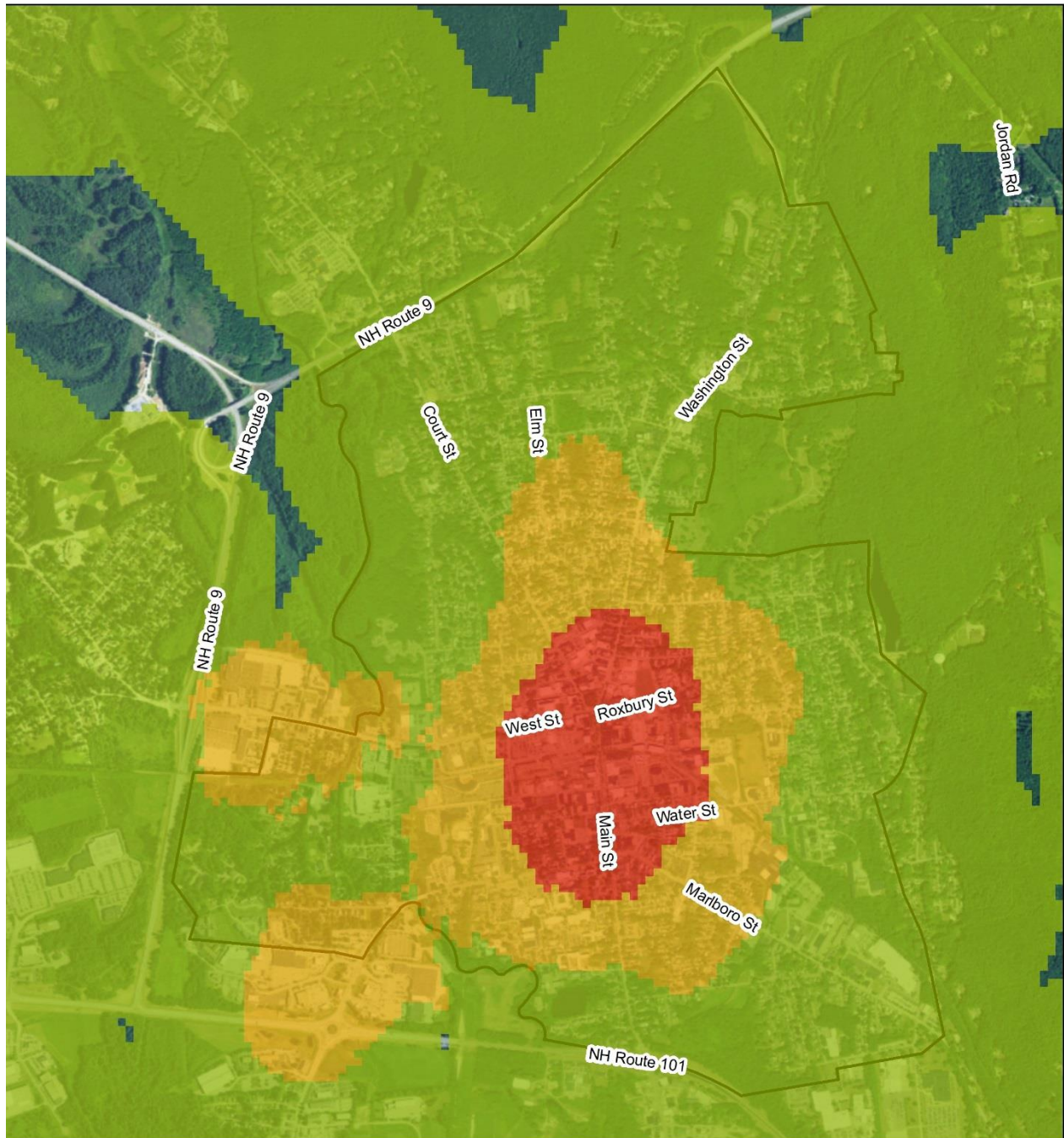


Figure 4.6 The concentration of the crimes in the entirety of Keene

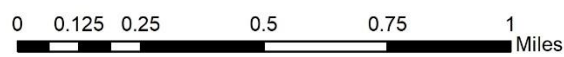


Crime



14,219 Total Crimes 2007-2017

3.9 Crimes Per Day



Data:
NH Granit
Keene Police Department
Keene Planning Department

Figure 4.7 Amalgamation of all crimes that have taken place in core area of Keene

Crime as addressed in the Keene Comprehensive Master Plan

In September of 2010 the *Keene Comprehensive Master Plan* was released by the City of Keene. The plan was created via a series of public events, surveys, forums, workshops, and informational sessions that took place over the preceding 30 months. The document addresses challenges the City of Keene faces, goals for Keene, and the paths that the city government will take to overcome challenges and meet goals. On pages 102 and 103 the plan focuses on the issue of safety in the community discusses plans to make Keene a safer place to live, work and visit.

Crime rates in Keene are compared to other similar sized communities in the United States and the *Master Plan* states that in comparison Keene is a safe place to live. It is stated that the majority of crimes committed in Keene are nonviolent and related to theft and other property related offenses. When the document was drafted stakeholders also encouraged the creation of spaces for dialogue between neighborhood associations and Keene State College to meet goals set by the greater community. A discourse between citizens and the college could as a potential solution of issues without necessitating police involvement.

A topic that surfaced throughout the public discussions relating to crime there was a desire expressed to create additional legislation pertaining to Keene State College and its students due to the high percentage of response calls among the community. Perceptions regarding the connection between KSC students and crime reached a boiling point during the “Pumpkinfest riots” of 2014. Although individuals from out of town generated much of the problem, students from the college were also associated with uncivil behavior. The consequences of this one event have most certainly affected the perceptions of crime in Keene. In early October

in 2017 the Mayor of Keene, Kendall Lane proposed a new city ordinance that fines property owners whose properties have three or more violations in an effort to counteract the high number of calls to student housing (Landen 2017). This seems to be targeted toward landlords that rent to Keene State College students as they are frequently more ‘hands off’ in the leasing process and because college students tend to produce noise and trash violations.

One of the solutions consistently brought up during public forums was the re-establishment of a police presence in downtown Keene, on foot and bicycle. Citizens of Keene believe that this would prevent crimes and other negative behavior from taking place. An example of such negative behaviors can be seen in Figure 4.8. In a summarizing statement on safety the plan states “We want a safe community so that we can minimize the cost of medical care by reducing the number of injuries; to provide a source of community pride; to encourage families and people of all ages to move to the community; and to maintain Keene’s high quality of life”(CMP 2010). These ideas culminate in a goal of creating a Public Safety program that would encourage the organization and collaboration of all parties toward a safer Keene.



Figure 4.8 The scene of an assault and robbery in Keene. **Source:** Authors.

The *Master Plan* addresses homelessness in a gentle fashion, only providing a background on the issue in Keene. The document neglects to address any sort of aggressive panhandling or public intoxication throughout the document. In 2017 these are the issues that have prompted public forums as seen in Figure 4.9. The creators of the *Master Plan* document proposed that the city government work with private landlords to make low income housing more available for at risk populations. The committee also suggested the creation of a government program that would act a liaison between the tenant and landlord acting as a co-signer to cover possible damages. To address the issue in holistic manner the government program would cooperate and collaborate with the many social service providers that Keene has, creating a network of support to assist the homeless.



Figure 4.9 Community forum addiction, alcohol, and aggressive panhandling. **Source:** Authors.

While the Keene Comprehensive Master Plan is a large report at 324 total pages, it only dedicates 3 pages, less than 1% of the pages in the entire document, to safety and homelessness.

When considering the issues that Keene faces today these topics are in the forefront of political discussion regularly occupying the front pages of local papers. When the Master Plan was created, "panhandling was essentially non-existent..." and "homelessness was generally confined to a 'tent city' behind the Hannaford Plaza" (Cusack 2017, Personal Interview). The leadership of Keene should look into the past to determine how these issues have become so prominent in the city. As the city begins to draft the next master plan these problems should be addressed and a devise a strategy to confront them.

Opioid Use and Crime in Keene, New Hampshire

"This is affecting every age, every gender, every demographic. Tomorrow, it could be your son"

- Keene Fire Chief Mark Howard (Personal Interview 2017).

New Hampshire has suffered over 800 deaths due to opioid-overdose during the years 2015 and 2016. Overall 35.85 people per 100,000 in the population of New Hampshire died due to opioid overdose in the year 2016, higher than the 33 per 100,000 who died due to overdoses in the year 2015 (New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services 2016). Overdoses reached the second highest cause of death in the state (Knopf 2015). In the last year there have been 478 confirmed fatal drug overdoses in New Hampshire alone (Landen 2016).

Of the opioid epidemic began with patients who were prescribed drugs such as OxyContin, Percocet, and others. Many opioid addictions start legally, with opioids that are prescribed to the user after a surgery or other medical procedure. Then when these drugs became too expensive and doctors no longer prescribe them, individuals take it upon themselves to find a more readily available opiate. Heroin has become the drug of choice. "Everybody knows

someone who's been affected—a family member, a friend, an acquaintance,” says New Hampshire Senator Jeb Bradley (Hoback 2016).

On October 18, 2017, an interview was conducted with Fire Chief Mark Howard about response and opioid use in Keene. The Keene Fire Department responds to all potential overdoses in the City of Keene. When the fire department responds to an overdose call, six to eight responders will be on the scene. Since 1993, Narcan has been available to those who are unconscious when the Fire Department responds to a call. A ‘coma-cocktail’ is given to those declared unconscious. This ‘coma-cocktail’, a phrase used by Chief Howard, contains Narcan for heroin overdoses, insulin for diabetics, and other drugs that may bring someone back to a conscious state from an unconscious state. Fire Chief Howard wants to make it known that Narcan is not a new drug, and it is not a miracle drug. Narcan was invented in 1963 and has been available to the Keene Fire Department since 1993.

In 2016, the Keene Fire Department began to track overdose calls when Narcan was administered. Since the department began tracking numbers have been increasing monthly according to Chief Howard. There is no apparent cause for the monthly increase in opioid overdoses. The data held by the Fire Department may contain increasing numbers, but what the Fire Department does not track is Narcan administered by a friend or family member to those individuals who have overdosed. “Narcan is available at the pharmacy. Anyone can walk in and ask for a dose or two, and the pharmacist will give them to you” (Chief Howard 2017). This is skewing numbers for the department and makes it difficult to track the areas with the highest numbers of overdoses. While drug use may be more prevalent in the downtown area than anywhere else in the city, all neighborhoods and areas of the city are being affected. According

to Chief Howard, the Fire Department has responded to calls in such disparate places as Ashuelot River Park, Carpenter Field, and the parking garage on Washington Street.

There have not been any overdose calls on any school property in Keene, nor has Narcan administered to anyone under the age of 18 by the Keene Fire Department. The Police and Fire Departments in began recording overdoses in 2015 and documenting all calls to action in 2016. A map of these data containing calls from midway through 2015 to September 2017 can be seen in Figure 4.10. Figure 4.10 displays density data to display where the greatest concentration of overdoses responses have occurred. Substance use is apparent when traveling down Main Street in Keene where numerous homeless people are located in specific areas of the town. These homeless people are often perceived as drug addicts, which leads to people thinking that they are involved in criminal activity. Due to the fact that the individual perspective of an area is heavily influenced by their surroundings and their prior knowledge of the area, if a Keene resident knows that drug use is an issue in the community they may be prone to think that there is actually drug activity in that particular location.

In Keene, the opioid crisis is readily apparent and *The Keene Sentinel* writes articles about the opioid crisis on a seemingly weekly basis, as displayed in Figure 4.11. In Cheshire County, throughout the year 2016, 14 people took fatal doses of Opioid-based drugs. With 5 fatalities, Keene recorded the highest number of opioid deaths in the county (Landen 2016). In July 2017, another article was published and stated that there had been nine deaths due to opiate overdoses in 24 hours in the neighboring city of Brattleboro, Vermont. Governor Chris Sununu explained how the government has historically tried to fix the opiate crisis by only treating addiction. What the government needs to do is treat mental health, addiction, and provide

education. Sununu mentions that these three subjects are closely related and cannot be treated individually; they should all be treated together (Whitmore 2017). The opioid crisis is real and present in Keene, and the only way to combat this is to work together as a whole.

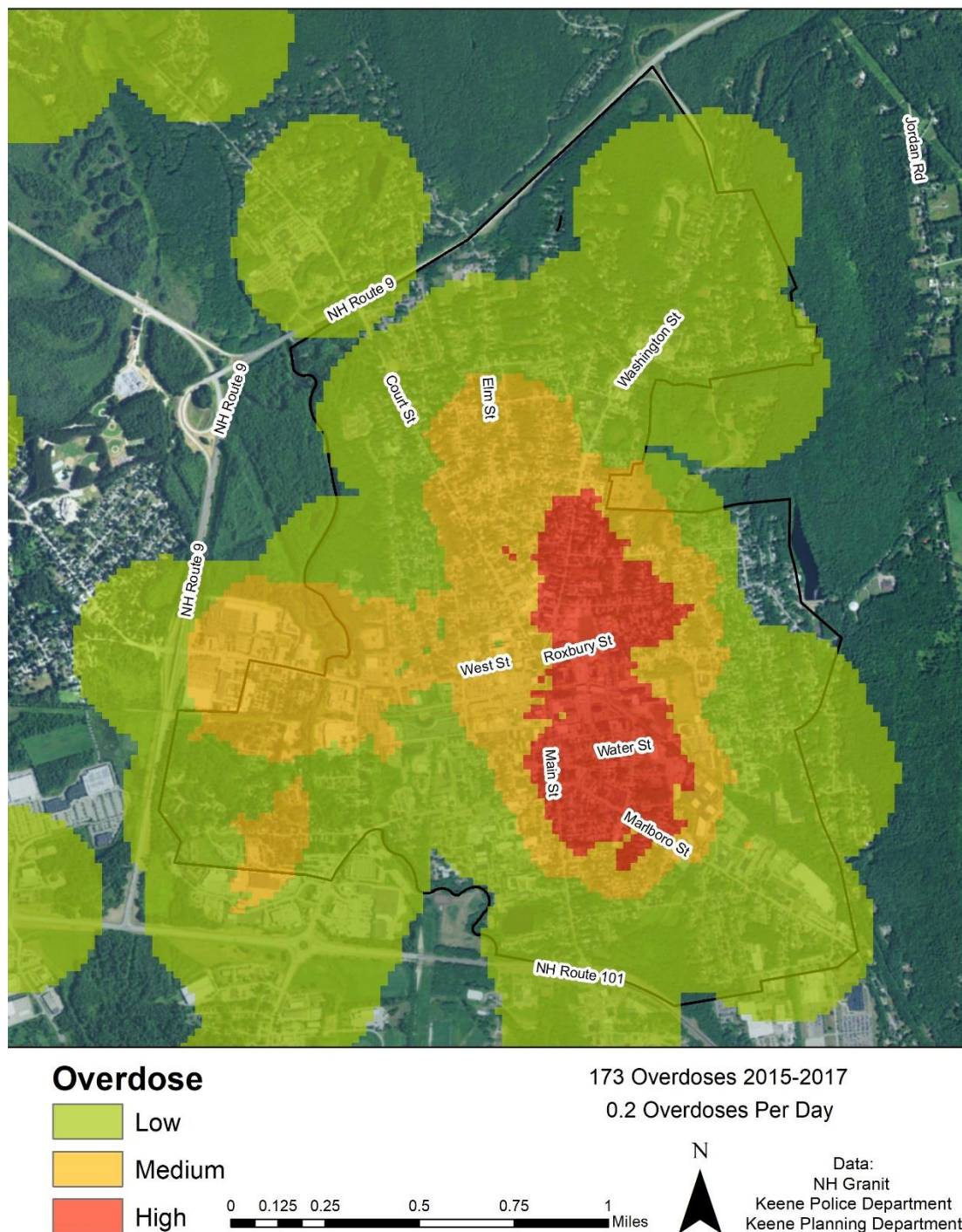


Figure 4.10 Overdose clusters in Downtown Keene 2015-2017



Figure 4.11 Headlines from the Keene Sentinel 2017

Keene and organizations within Keene are taking several initiatives to help alleviate the opioid epidemic occurring in Keene. One of which being that Cheshire-Medical Center has started a program of volunteers who will come in to snuggle with babies born with an opioid addiction. Babies born with addictions immediately go through withdrawals. For infants, skin-to-skin contact is very important when making a recovery. Out of 107 babies born at Cheshire-Medical Center, eight of these babies were born addicted to opiates. The program is becoming

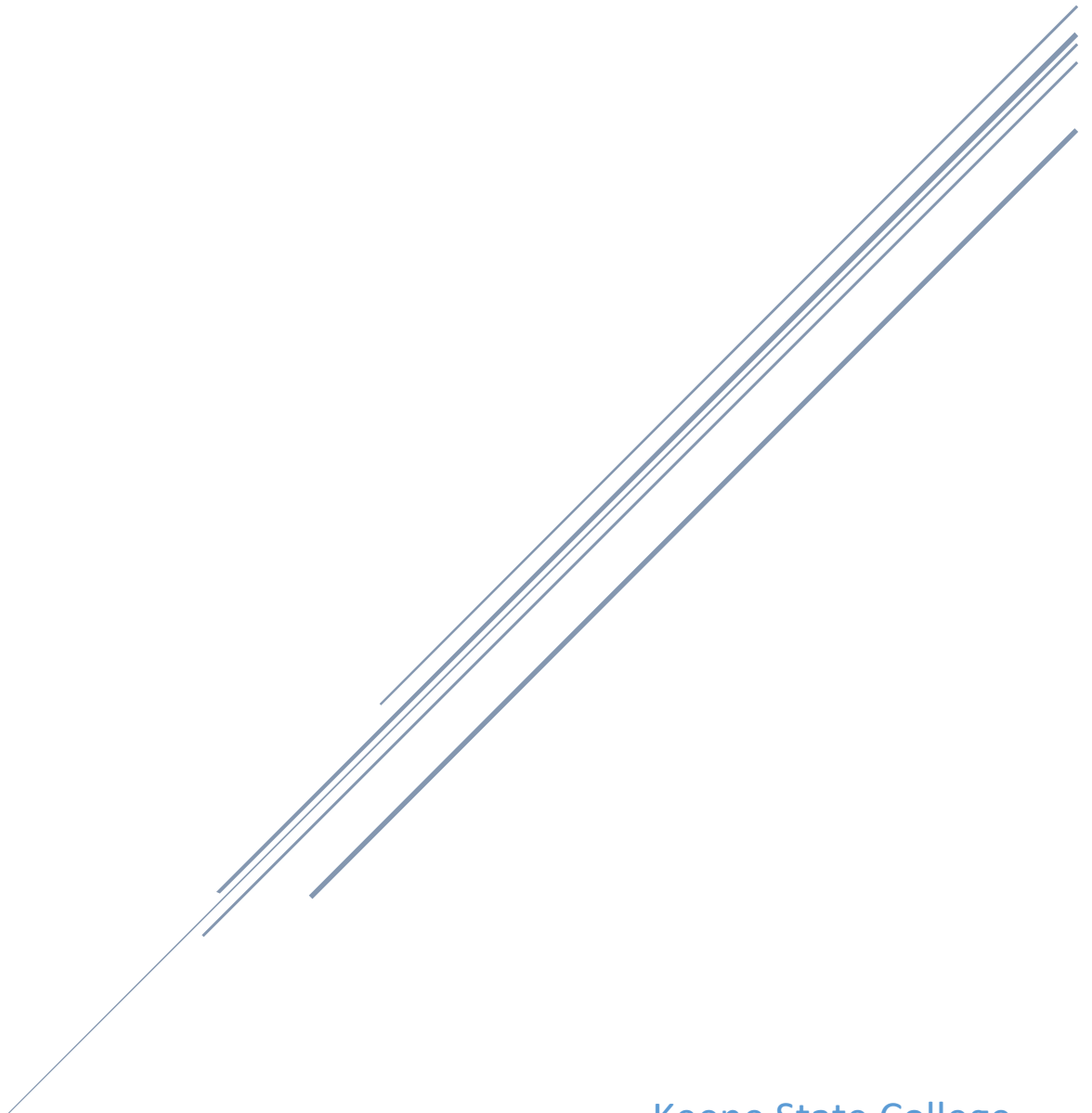
more and more successful as the hospital has jumped from six to 23 cuddlers in 2017. This is just one initiative to help combat the opioid crisis. If opioids can be combated, some of the perceptions held by some in regards towards Keene downtown area may dissipate (Ginter 2017).

Summary

While Keene is rightly considered a relatively peaceful city, drug overdoses have become more common throughout Keene in recent years. Homelessness, and the visibility of the homeless, has likewise increased. A drug epidemic is currently taking place in New Hampshire and Keene is not immune. Despite such criminal activity, Keene remains a comparatively peaceful and safe community. The ethos of collaboration between the city government, civic, and non-profit organization bodes well for the future of the city and could well lead to a decrease in the crime rate of Keene in the near future.

CHAPTER 5

Crime Maps of Keene



Keene State College

Figure	Crime	Description
5.1	<i>Assault</i>	Assaults in Keene are centered on the downtown area between Union St. and Elliot St. The data are including all types of assault such as 2 nd degree and simple assault
5.2	<i>Felonious Sexual Assault</i>	Felonious sexual assaults appear to be centered in three main areas; Washington St., Central Square, and Marlborough St. Felonious sexual assaults include any type of forcible penetration.
5.3	<i>Robbery</i>	Robberies appear most in the Central Square area as well as the West Street Shopping Center.
5.4	<i>Murder Manslaughter</i>	There have only been four murders in Keene in the last 10 years a testament to the relative safety of Keene.
5.5	<i>Burglary</i>	Burglaries in Keene are also centered around Central Square. However, it extends further north toward Route 10 and a small cluster appears on Pearl St.
5.6	<i>Larceny-Theft</i>	Larceny-Theft occurs in the most populated sections of Keene as well as both the Riverside and West Street Shopping Centers
5.7	<i>Motor Vehicle Theft</i>	Motor vehicle theft is uncommon in Keene and is clustered in the Central Square area.
5.8	<i>Open Container Violations</i>	Open container violations are most prevalent on Main Street and adjacent to the college and other student housing.

Map Methodology

The crime maps were created with data made available to this project courtesy of the Keene Police Department and the Keene Planning Department. Crime records were extracted from a case offenses file through a query for each specific crime as well as other vernacular for each crime. An example of this is motor vehicle theft as it could also be listed as car-jacking, auto-theft, or MV theft. These crimes were then geocoded by addresses on to a map of Keene. After the points of each crime were identified and exact duplicates were removed, the point density tool was utilized to display the where each crime occurs the most frequently. The breaks were modified in the symbology for each crime based on the number of occurrences as some crimes appeared more frequently than others. To simplify the viewing process the break values were substituted with low, medium, and high.

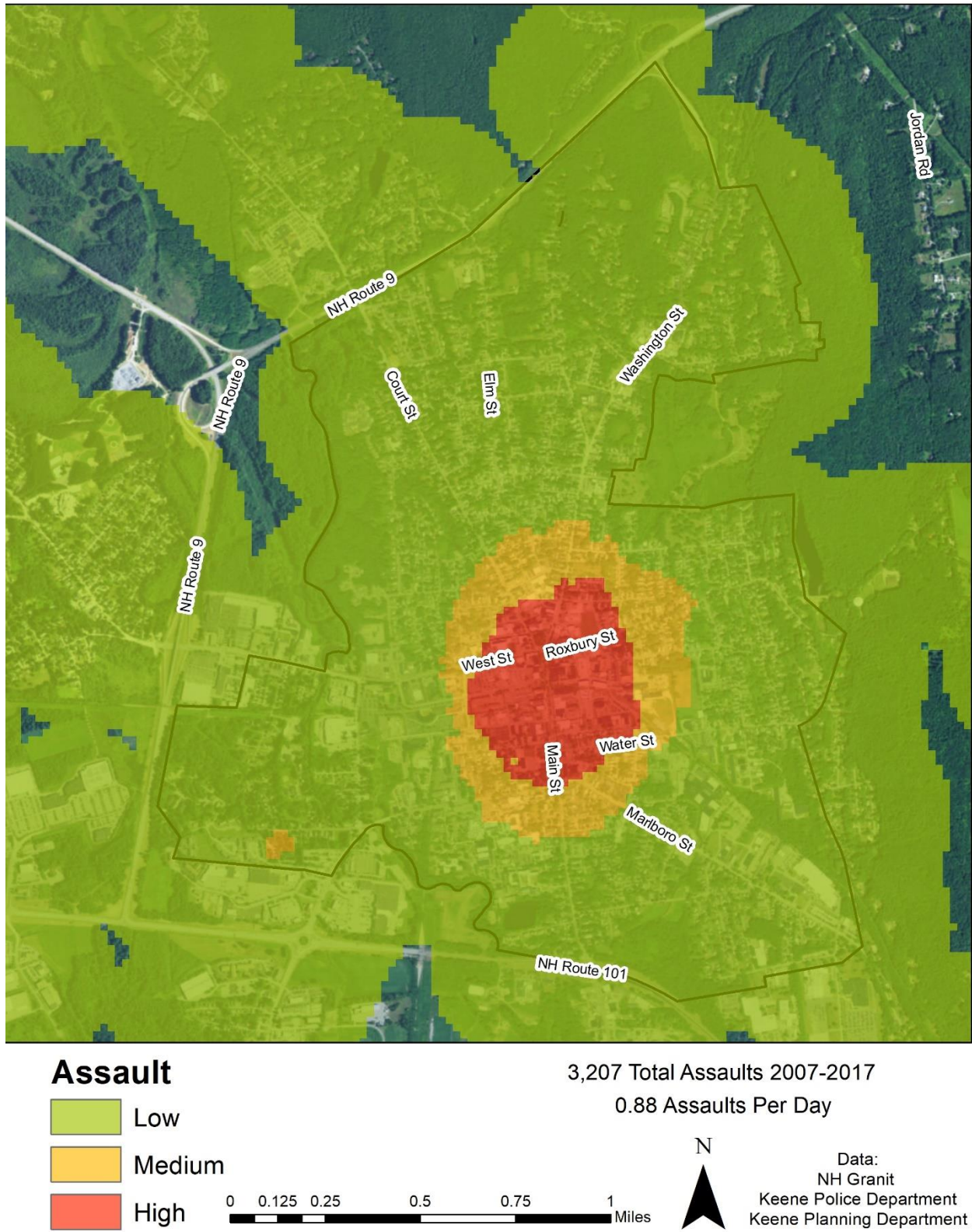
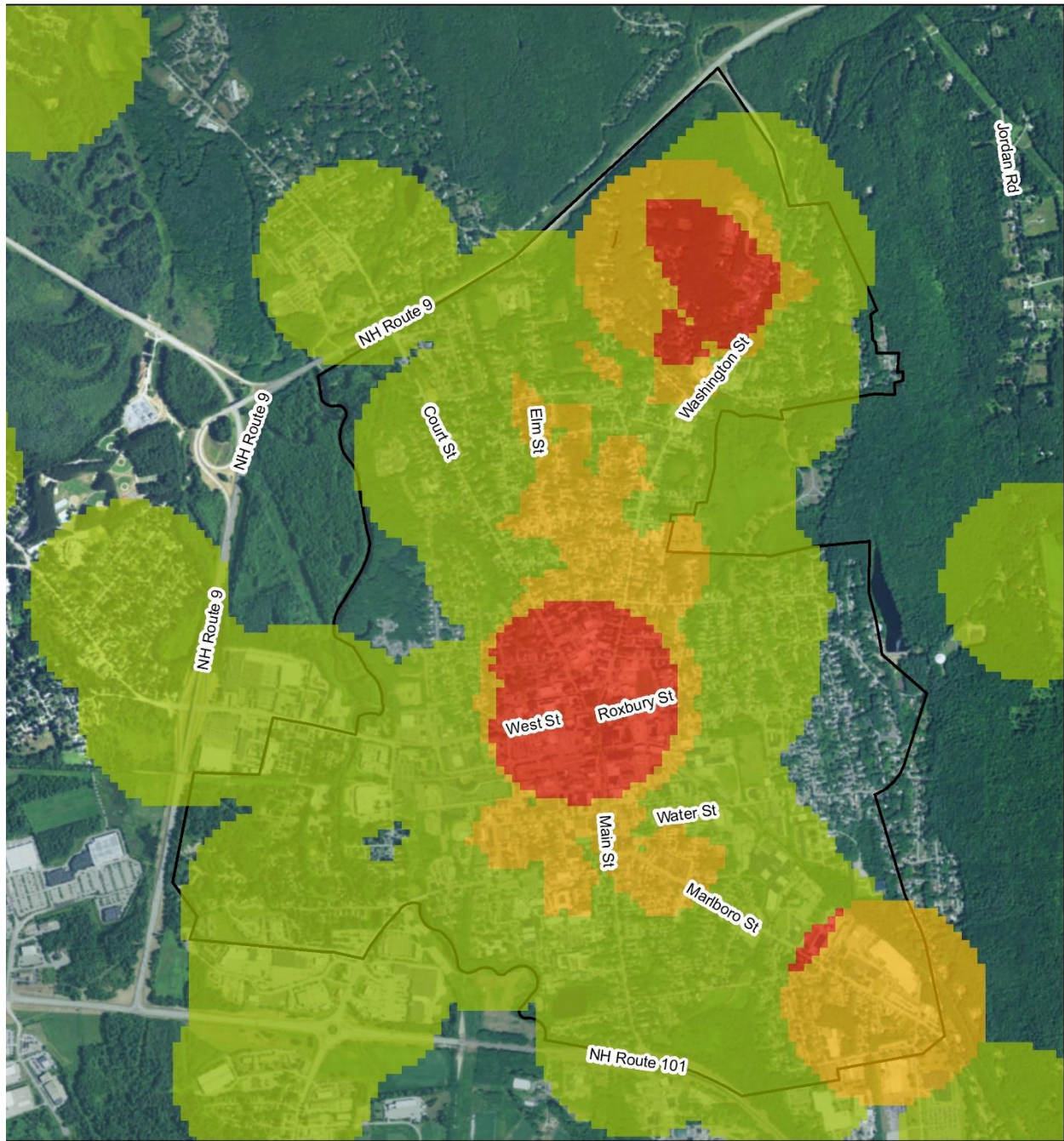


Figure 5.1 Map of assaults in Keene

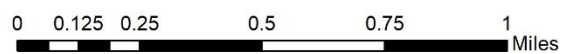


Felonious Sexual Assault



141 Total Felonious Sexual Assaults 2007-2017

0.04 Felonious Sexual Assaults Per Day



Data:
NH Granit
Keene Police Department
Keene Planning Department

Figure 5.2 Map of felonious sexual assaults in Keene

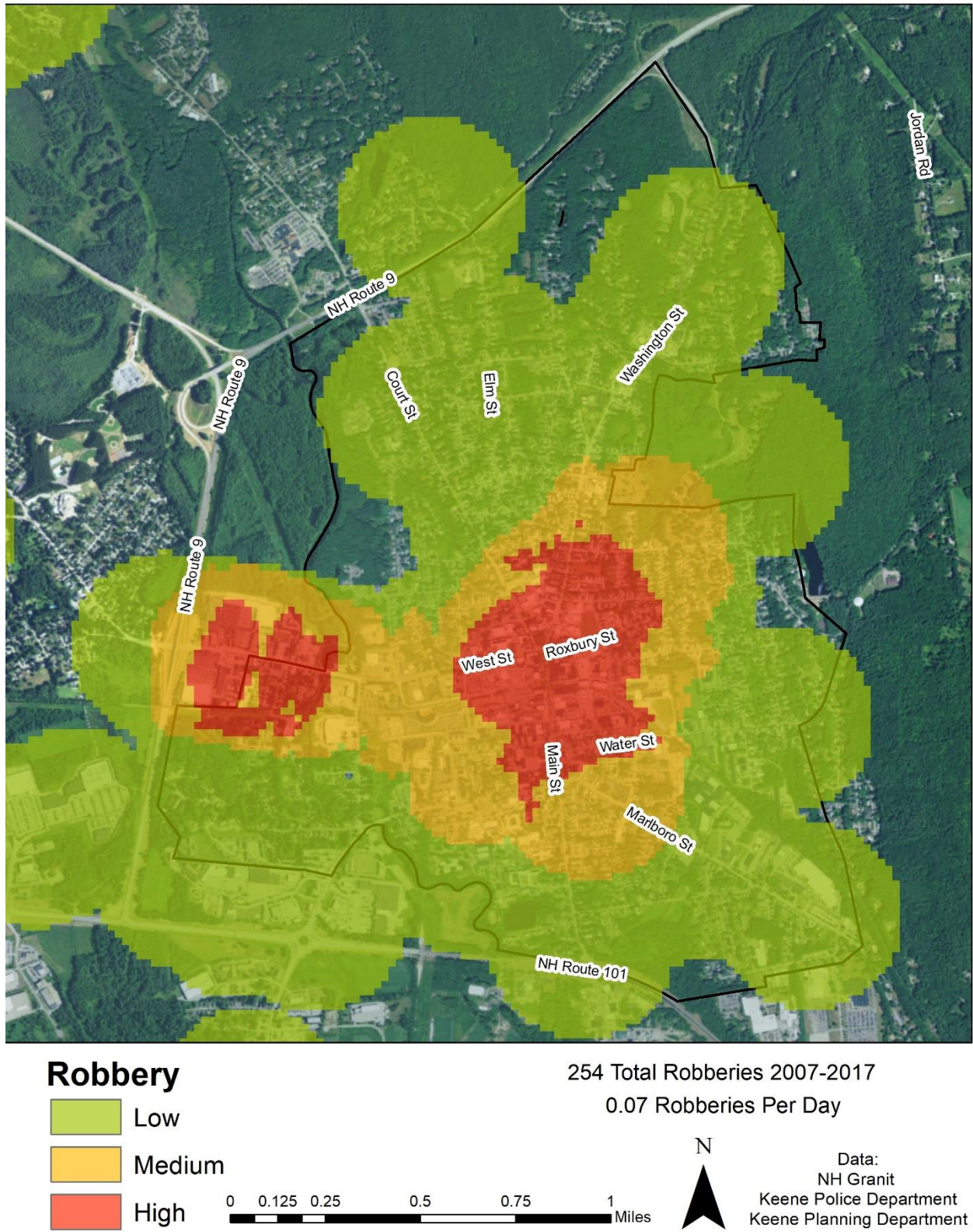


Figure 5.3 Map of robberies in Keene

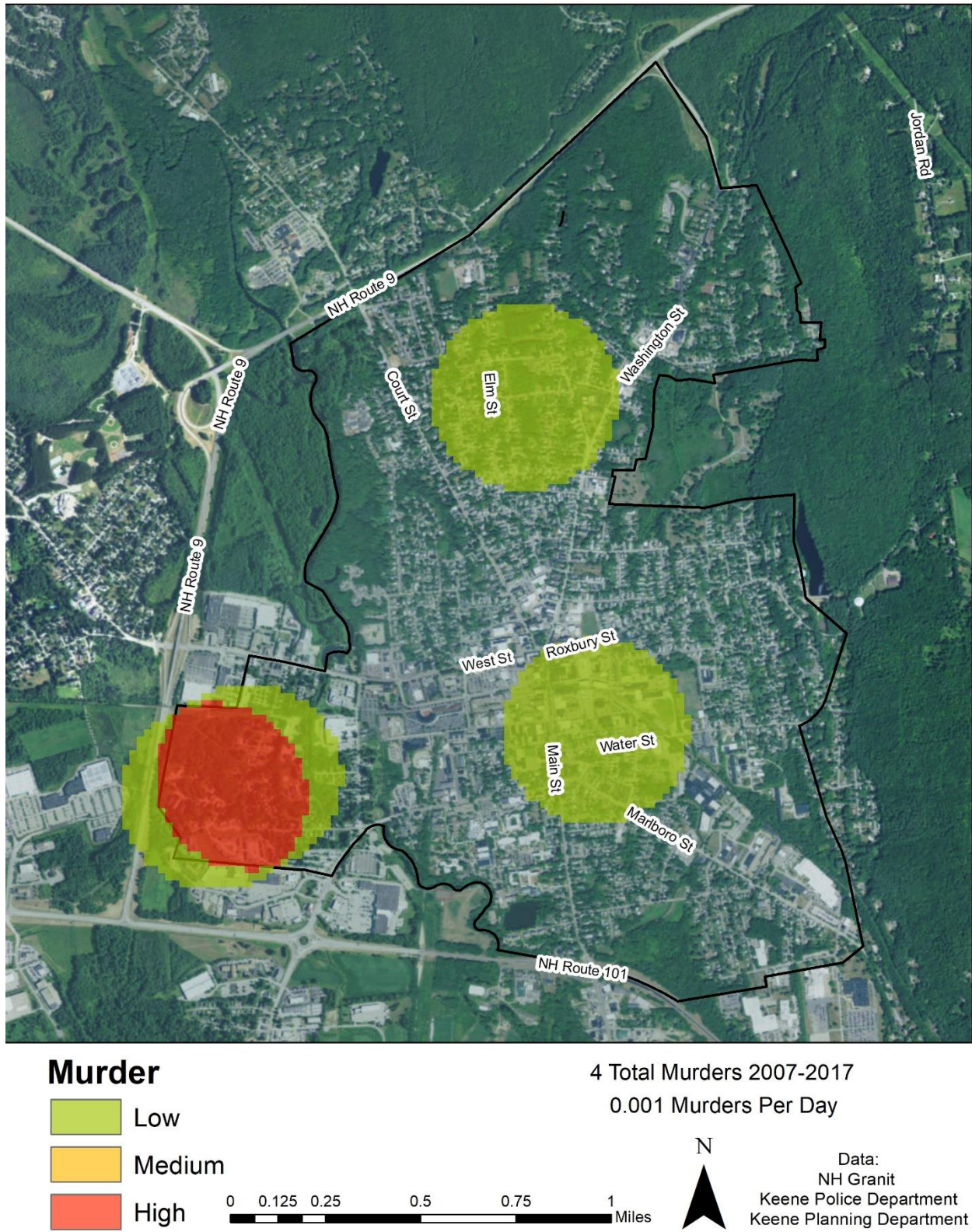
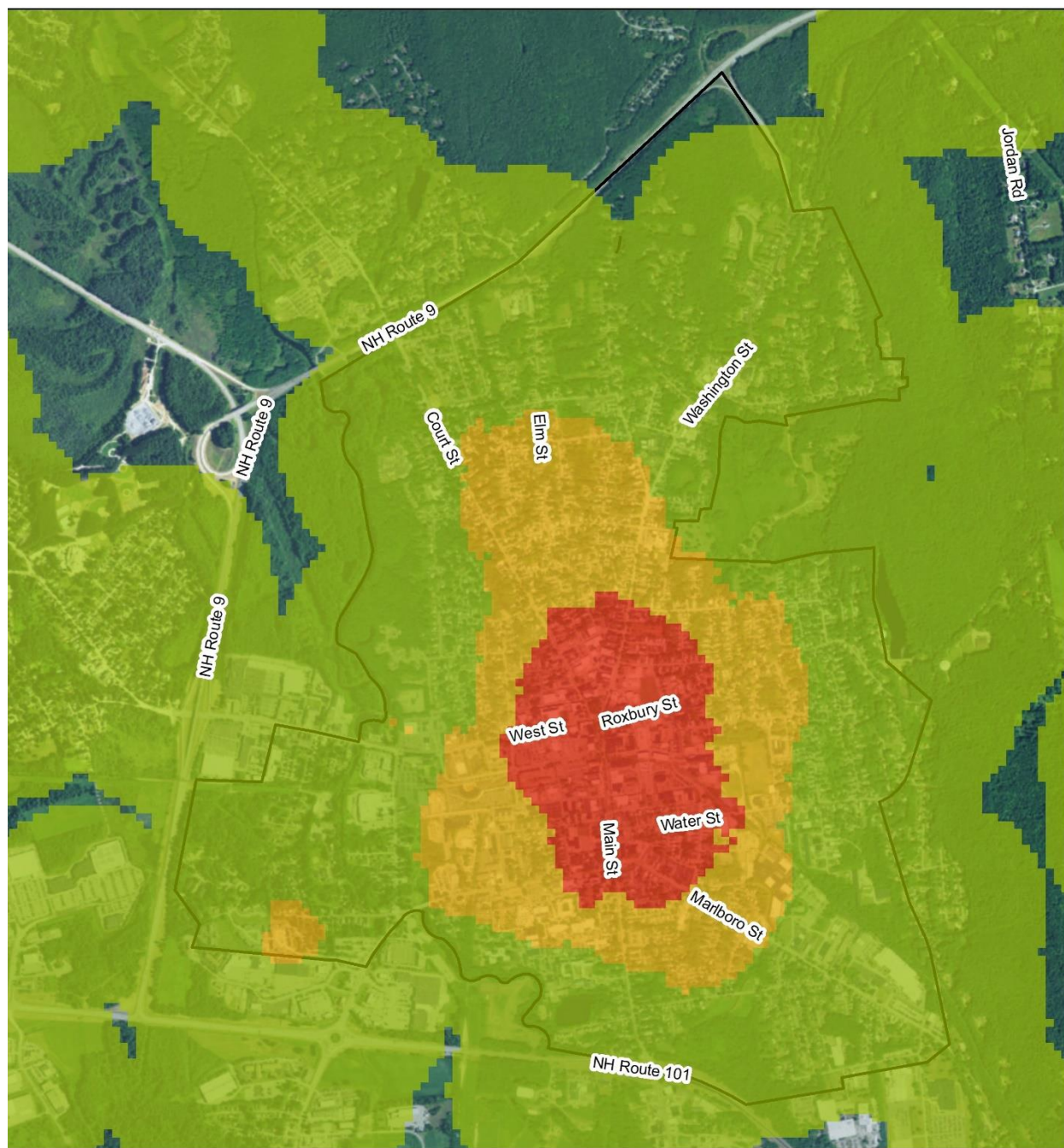
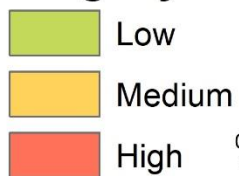


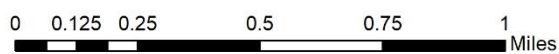
Figure 5.4 Map of murders in Keene



Burglary



1,146 Total Burglaries 2007-2017
0.31 Burglaries Per Day



Data:
NH Granit
Keene Police Department
Keene Planning Department

Figure 5.5 Map of burglaries in Keene

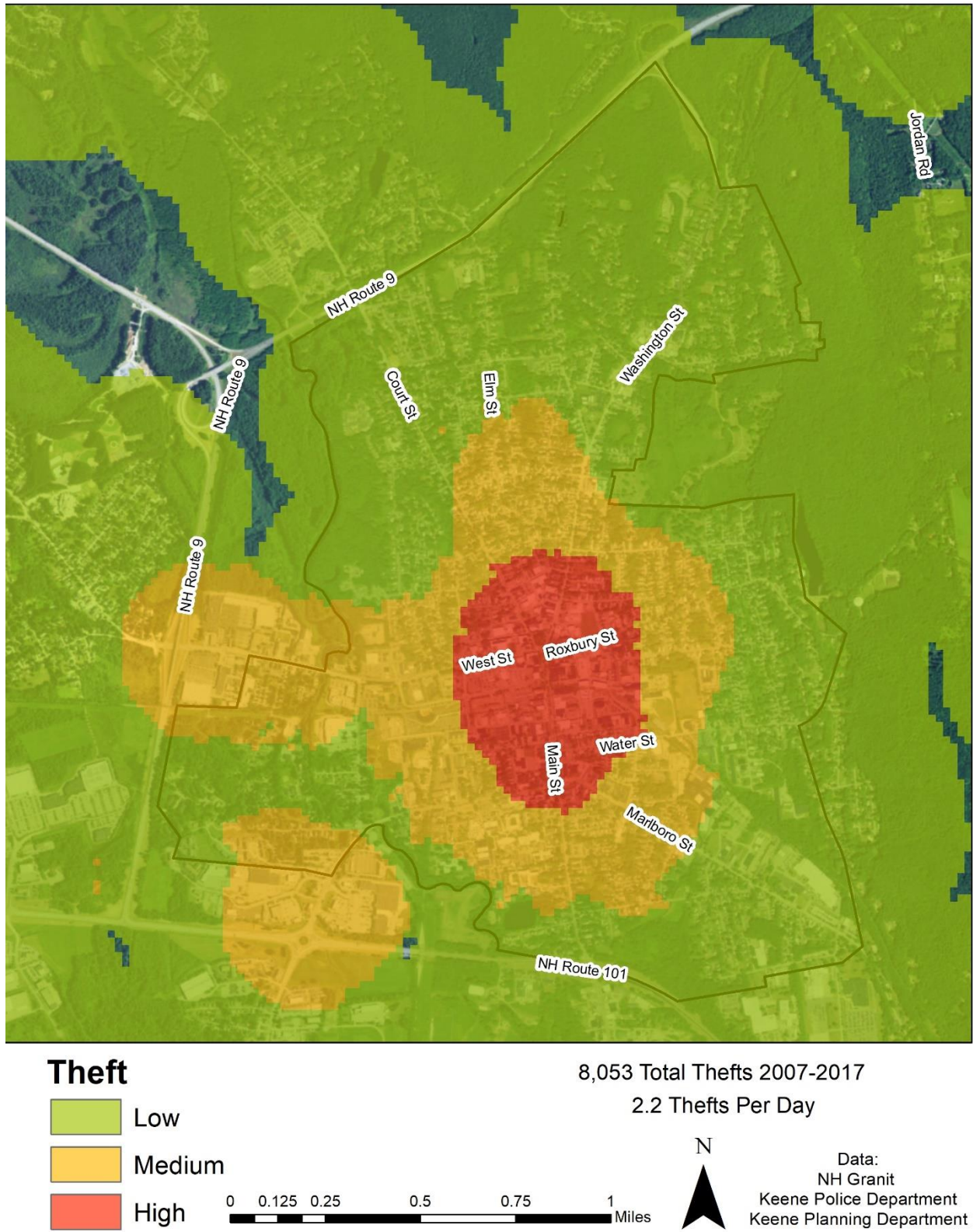
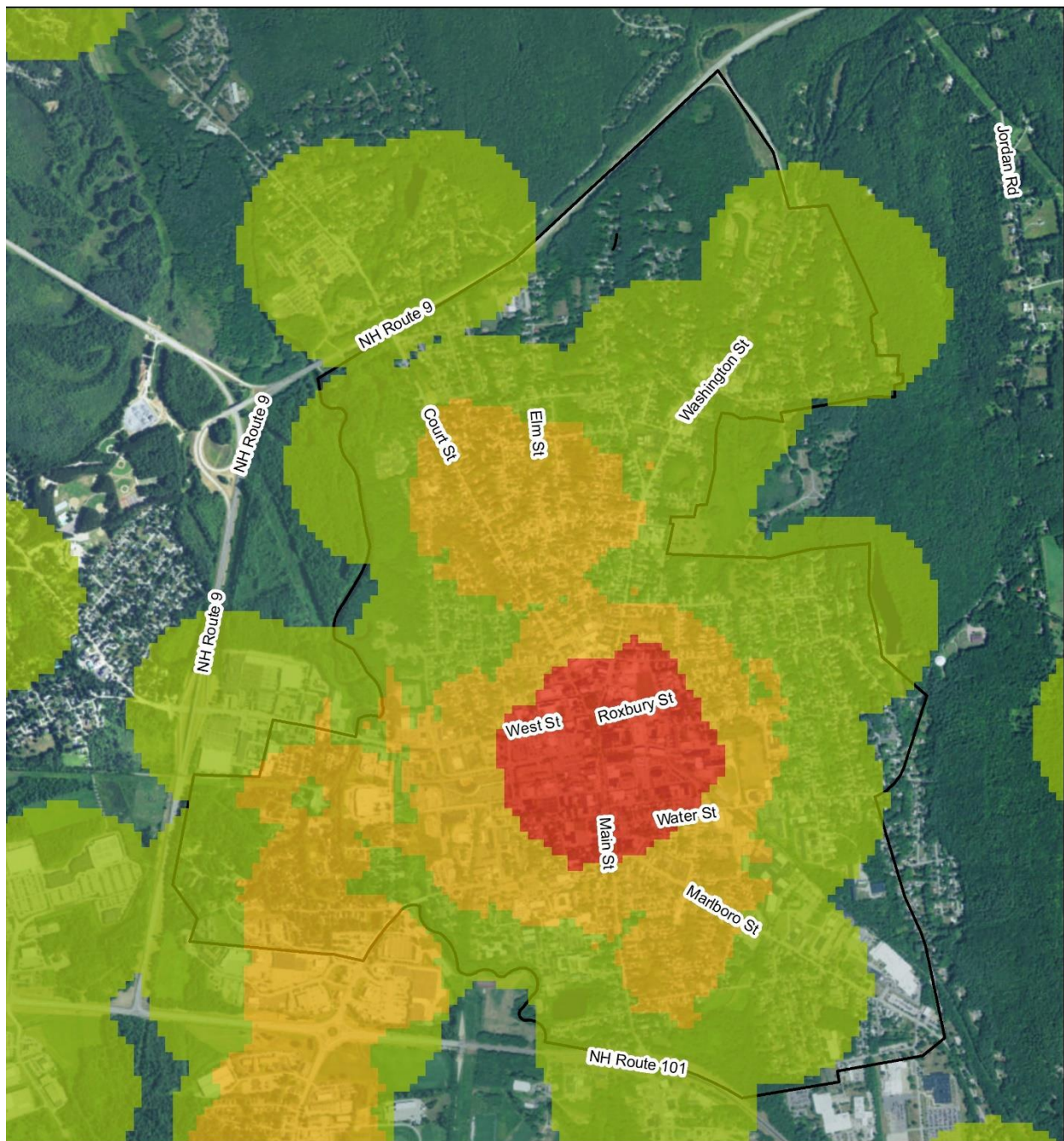


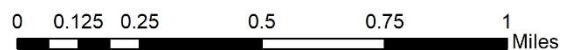
Figure 5.6 Map of thefts in Keene



Motor Vehicle Theft

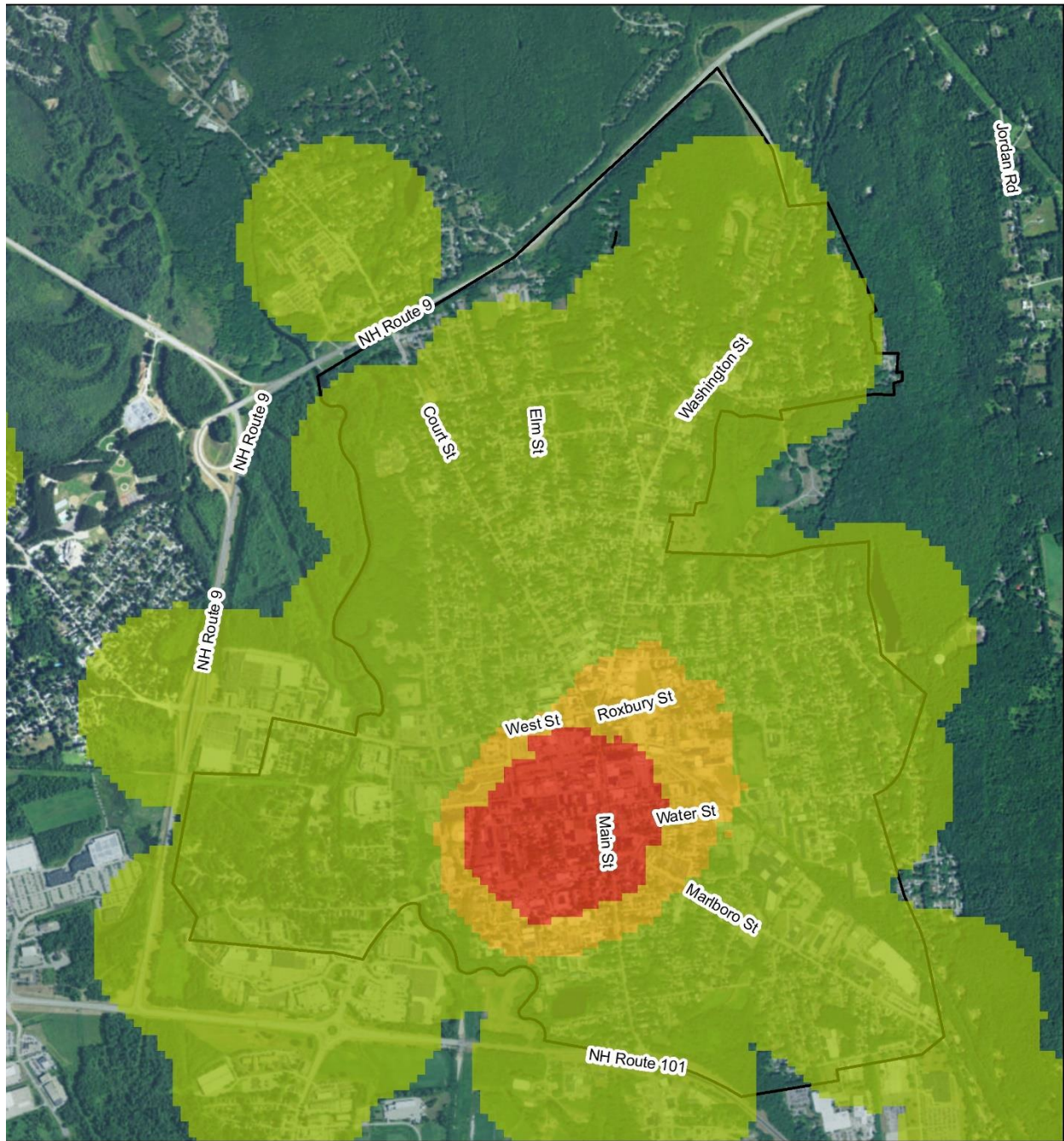


146 Total Motor Vehicle Thefts 2007-2017
0.04 Motor Vehicle Thefts Per Day



Data:
NH Granit
Keene Police Department
Keene Planning Department

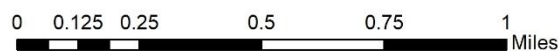
Figure 5.7 Map of motor vehicle thefts in Keene



Open Container Violations



1,095 Open Container Violations 2007-2017
0.3 Open Container Violations Per Day

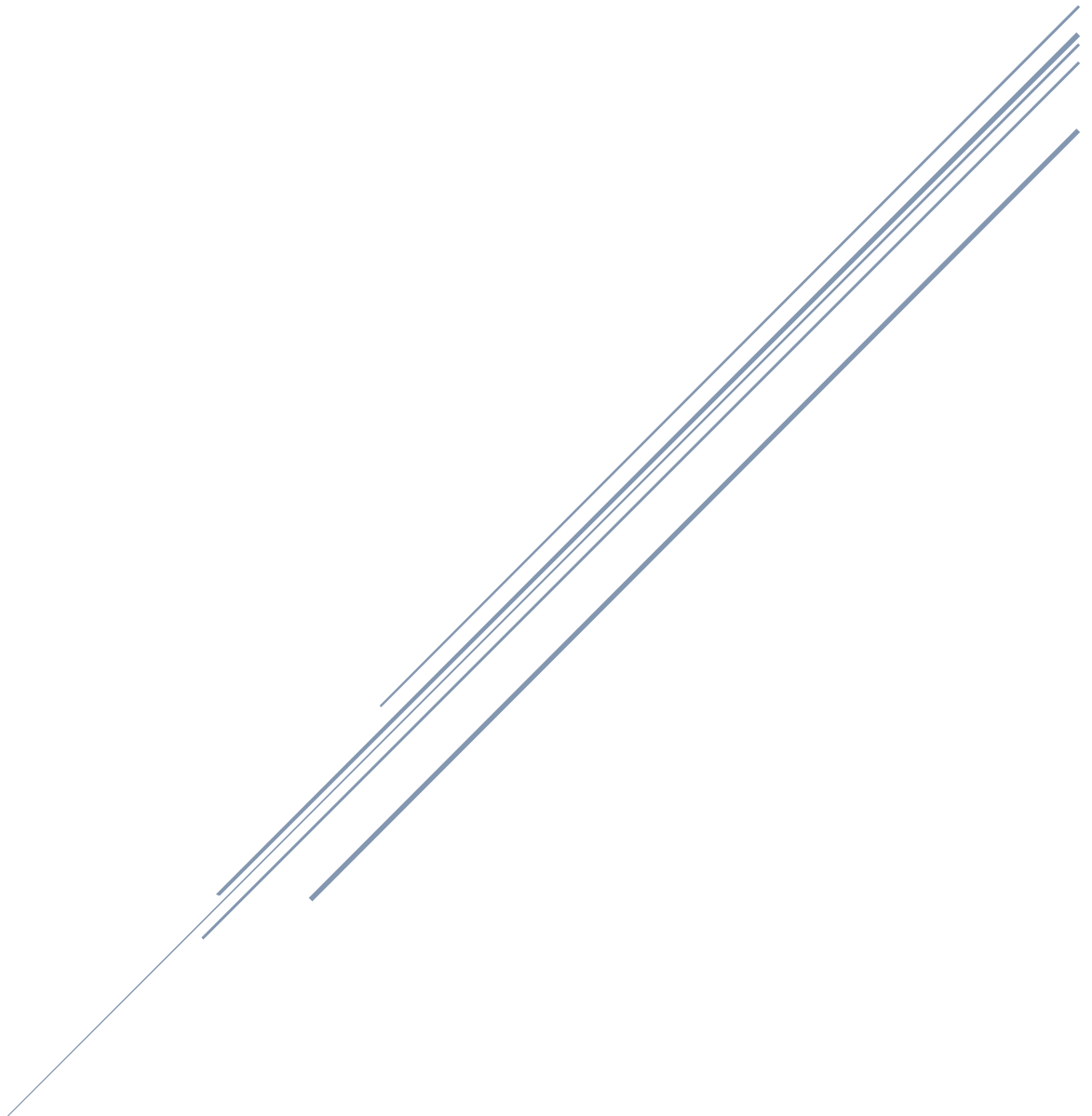


Data:
NH Granit
Keene Police Department
Keene Planning Department

Figure 5.8 Map of open container violations in Keene

CHAPTER 6

Original Research and Results



The outcome of this project is a juxtaposition of the perceptions of where residents of Keene believe crime occurs and where crimes actually occur. In addition to this comparison, it also provides insight as to what makes people feel unsafe in Keene and what can be done to improve the situation. The Police Chief of Keene, Steven Russo, who at the end of an interview stated his optimism that the results of this project could be “invaluable to the KPD and the City”, set these outcomes. The strong partnership with the KPD proved to be crucial to the success of this project and would not have been possible without their insight and guidance.

Survey

To gather data on the perception of crime in Keene a survey, seen in Appendix 1, generated over 200 responses from people who live in or are otherwise familiar with the downtown area of Keene. The surveys were distributed via Qualtrics and in hard copy form (Figure 6.1) to a plethora of stakeholders in Keene including organizations such as:

- Southeast Keene Neighborhood Group
- Scores Running Club
- Body and Soul Running Club
- Cheshire Medical Center
- Keene Police Department Facebook Page
- Residents of Keene



Figure 6.1 A member of the Body and Soul Running Club taking the survey. **Source:** Authors.

Procuring data from these groups was crucial to the success of the survey as because participants targeted have a vested interest in the safety of Keene as well as an intimate knowledge of the area. The survey questions were generated in collaboration with the KPD and modified to suit a variety of statistical tests to evaluate the hypotheses. Data were gathered regarding; age, gender, resident/non-resident, how safe respondents feel in Keene in various situations, recommendations to make Keene safer, and where they feel unsafe in Keene. Surveys of this type provides a unique insight into the attitudes of residents in a small town community like Keene.

The survey map that participants selected places they feel unsafe on was purposely imported at 1,000x1,294 pixels. The length in feet of the sides of the frame were recorded in ArcGIS 9,600x12,424 and the eastings and northings were recorded for its exact scale 814,937E and 165,704N. The points were extracted from Qualtrics into an Excel sheet in (X,Y) pixel format which were then converted back into feet to place them in ArcGIS. To calculate how many feet one pixel is worth, 9,600 was divided by 1000 and 12,424 by 1,294 for a result of 9.6 feet. The (X,Y) pixel values were then multiplied by 9.6 and the eastings were added to 814,937E and the northings were subtracted from 165,704N. It is crucial for the map document to be projected in a coordinate system that utilizes a coordinate system in feet such as NAD 1983 State Plane New Hampshire FIPS 2800 (US Feet) Which was utilized in this map. The resulting values were then imported into ArcGIS as (X,Y) data to create points. The Point Density tool in ArcGIS used on these points to display the areas of highest concentrations of perceived crime in downtown Keene.

The map generated by survey responses can be seen in Figure 6.2. This figure reveals where more than 200 survey respondents identified 342 points displaying where they feel unsafe

in downtown Keene. In a similar fashion to the maps of crime occurrences in Keene, the individual responses cluster in the downtown area with an abnormal amount of responses in the Railroad Square and Hundred Nights Shelter area. It is important to note that a majority of the survey participants neglected to select other areas that have had relatively high crime rates in the past. These areas include Marlborough Street, the West Street Shopping center and the Riverside Shopping Plaza.

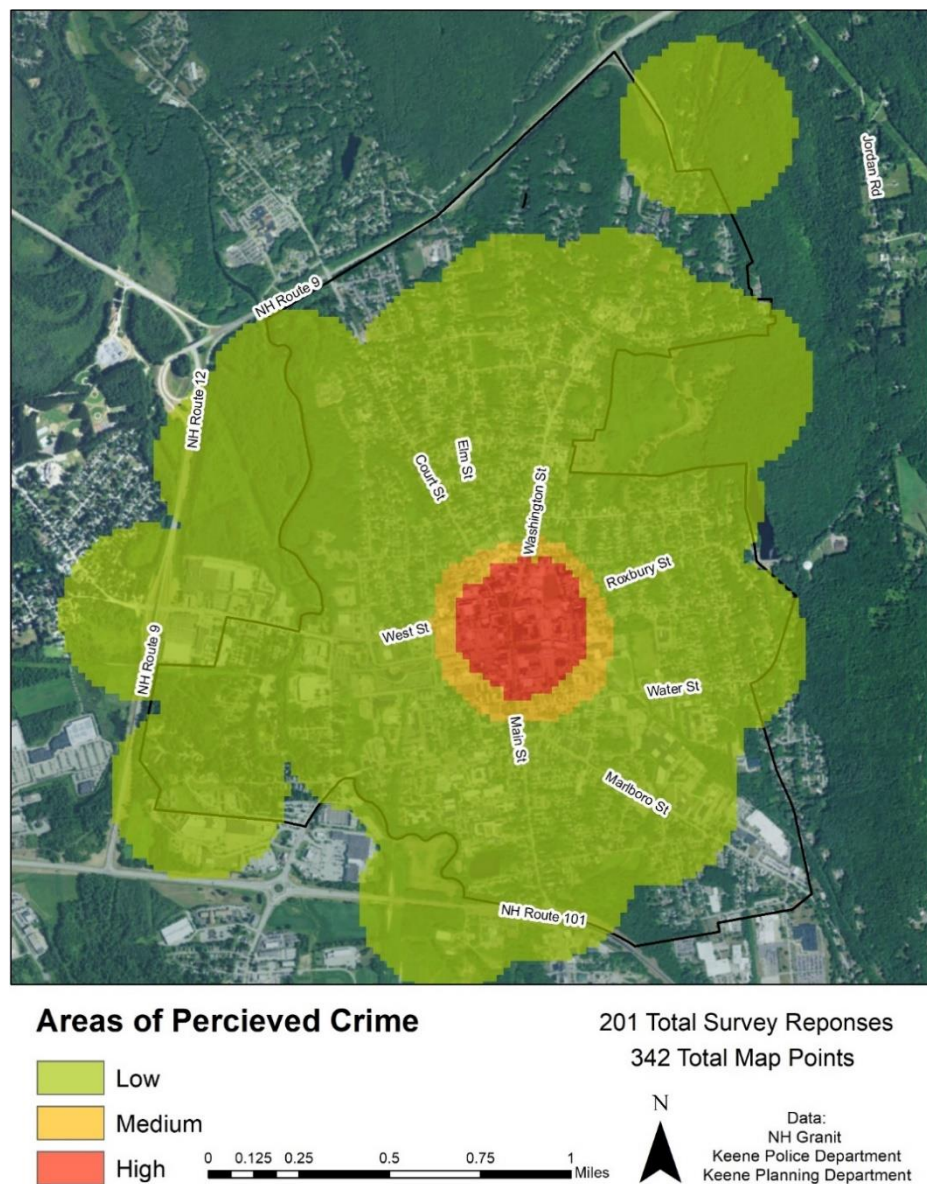


Figure 6.2 Map of perceived crime in downtown Keene

Gender

The responses from men and women on the survey tended to be notably different. For instance, women are on average more likely to change their activities in downtown Keene due to their perception of crime in the downtown area of Keene according to the responses that were received on the survey. *Over 39% of women who took the survey indicated that they have changed their activities in when in downtown Keene due to the crime that they perceive to be occurring in the town.* Only 25% of men who took the survey said the same. More importantly however, only 36% of women said that crime did not influence their activities in downtown Keene while more than half of the men that replied to the survey said that crime that occurred in downtown Keene did not influence their activities whatsoever (Figure 6.3).

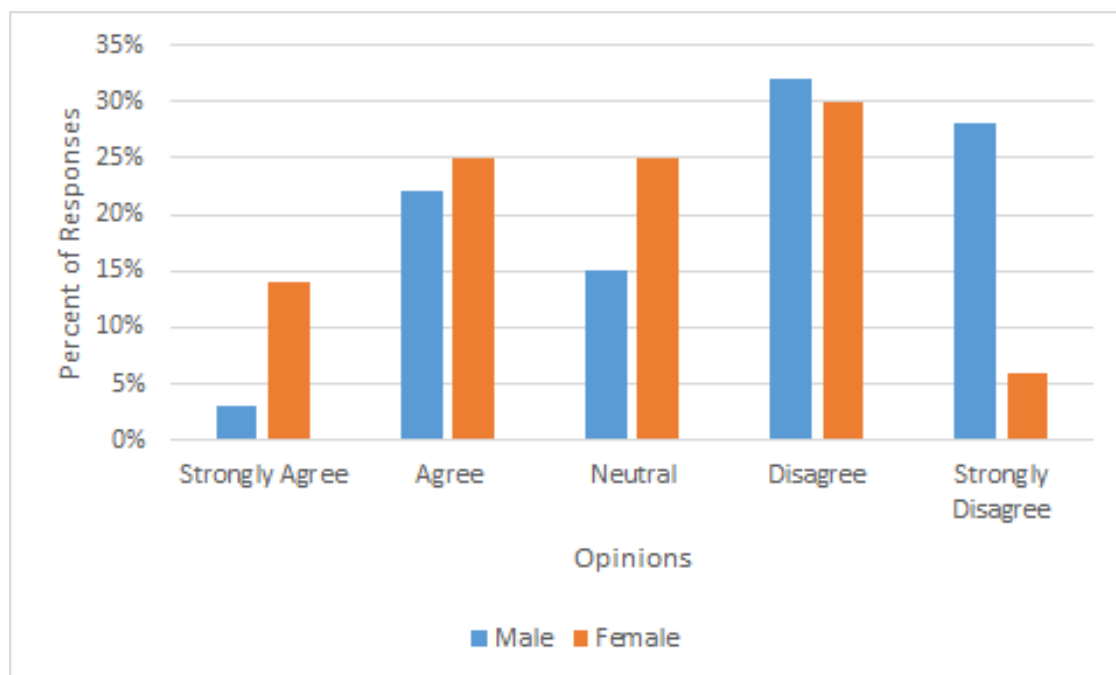


Figure 6.3 Men and Women changes in activity due to crime in Keene

While women responded that they are likely to change their activity due to criminal activity that they perceive to be happening in downtown Keene it is likely that the actual responses given would depend on the type of activity, what time of day the activity is happening,

activity in which they are partaking, the season, and various other factors. Time of day likely plays a big role in how safe people feel. People like to see what is around them, it makes them feel safe, which is why most people feel safer during the day than they do at night. Both men and women feel safe in downtown Keene during the day as 89% of men reported feeling safe while 79% of women reported feeling safe. This makes sense because there tends to be many people outside in downtown Keene during the day and the street is well lit making it easy to spot potential risks.

People feel less safe in downtown Keene at night than they do during the day. Most men still reported that they feel safe overall, but 42% of women respondents reported feeling unsafe or very unsafe in downtown Keene at night (Figure 6.4). There are potentially several reasons for the feelings of insecurity at night. The fact that there is a large difference between how men and women feel at night should lead to further investigation of why this is an occurrence among the population.

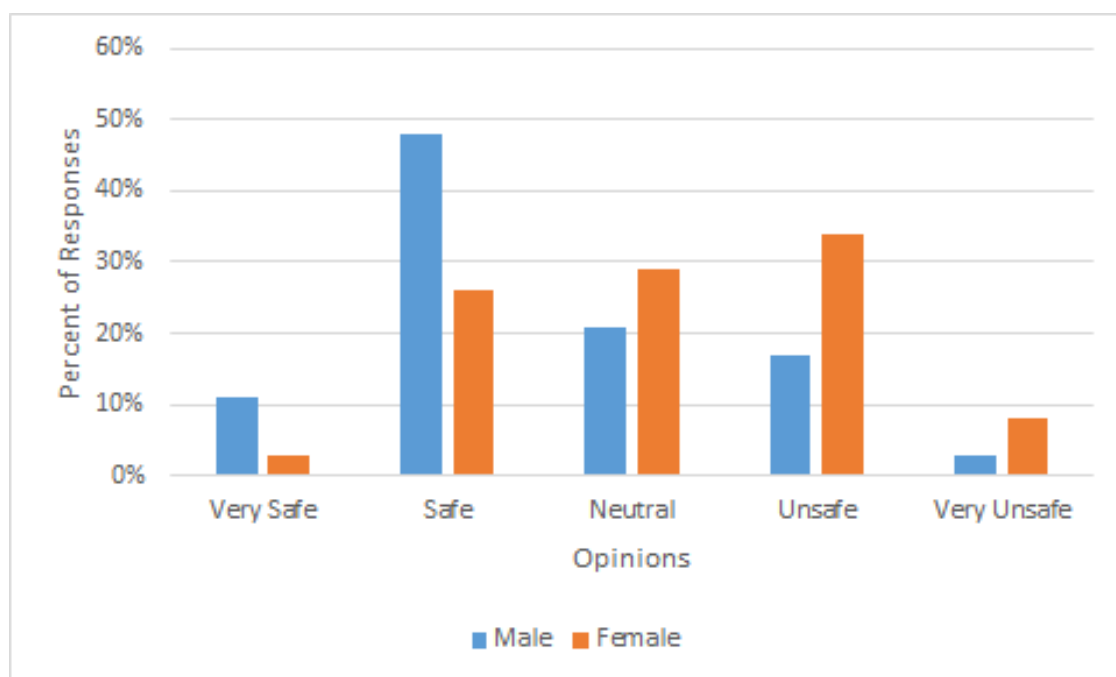


Figure 6.4 Men and Women feelings of safety in downtown Keene at night

Women feel less safe than men do in almost every question that was asked except for when asked whether or not Keene is safer than other New Hampshire cities, In this case most women responded by saying that Keene did indeed feel safer to them than other cities in New Hampshire. This correlates with the actual low crime rate of Keene. Men shared a similar viewpoint, only having a slightly smaller percentage of men saying that Keene felt safer than other New Hampshire cities. With that being said, a smaller percentage of men, nine percent, said that Keene was less safe than other cities in New Hampshire while 12% of women said that Keene is a city that is less safe than other cities in New Hampshire (Figure 6.5).

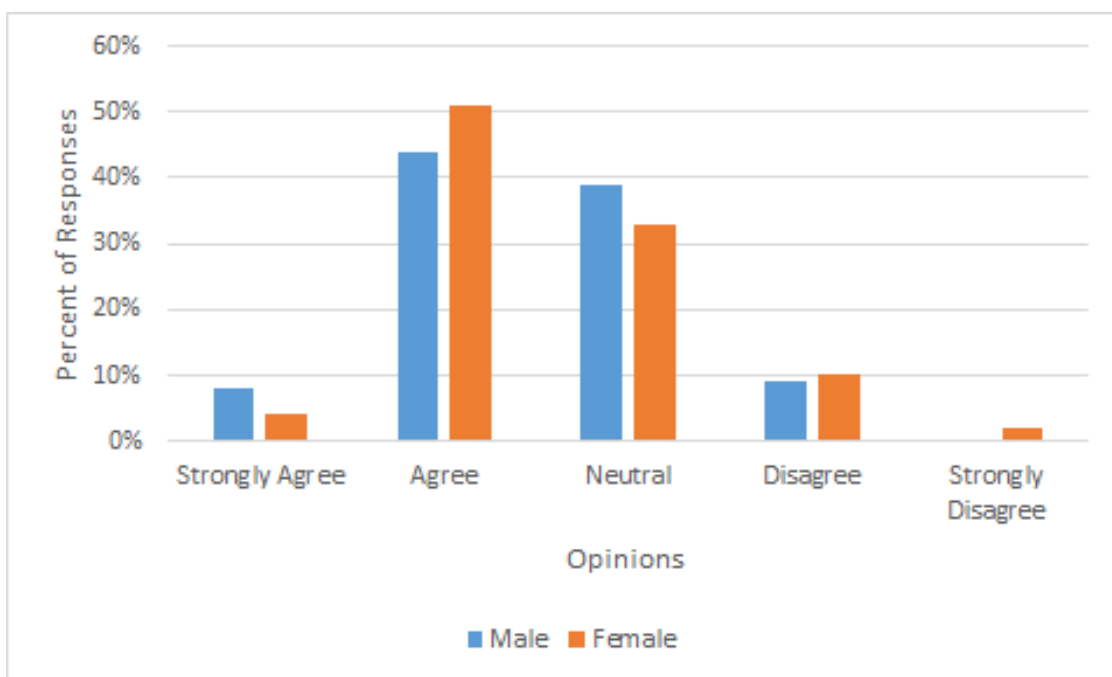


Figure 6.5 Keene safety compared to other New Hampshire cities

The living quality of Keene is also perceived to have lowered due to the amount of crime that has been occurring in the downtown area according to the survey respondents. Both men and women had strong feelings when it came to this issue – *with 55% of men and 66% of women saying that the amount of crime that occurs in downtown Keene affects the livability of Keene.*

This would make it seem that Keene should quickly work to reduce the amount of crime that is occurring in its downtown. In reality, the amount of crime in Keene has already decreased from where it was just a few years ago. Despite this, it can be seen in Figure 6.6 that the people who took the survey believe that the amount of crime has increased over the past three years. Only two percent of men and one percent of women who responded to the survey believe crime has decreased over the past three years. These opinions could be attributed to a few different factors, those being media coverage of crime that occurs in Keene, the opioid epidemic that is currently occurring in New Hampshire, and what seems to be an increase of both panhandling and homeless activity in the town.

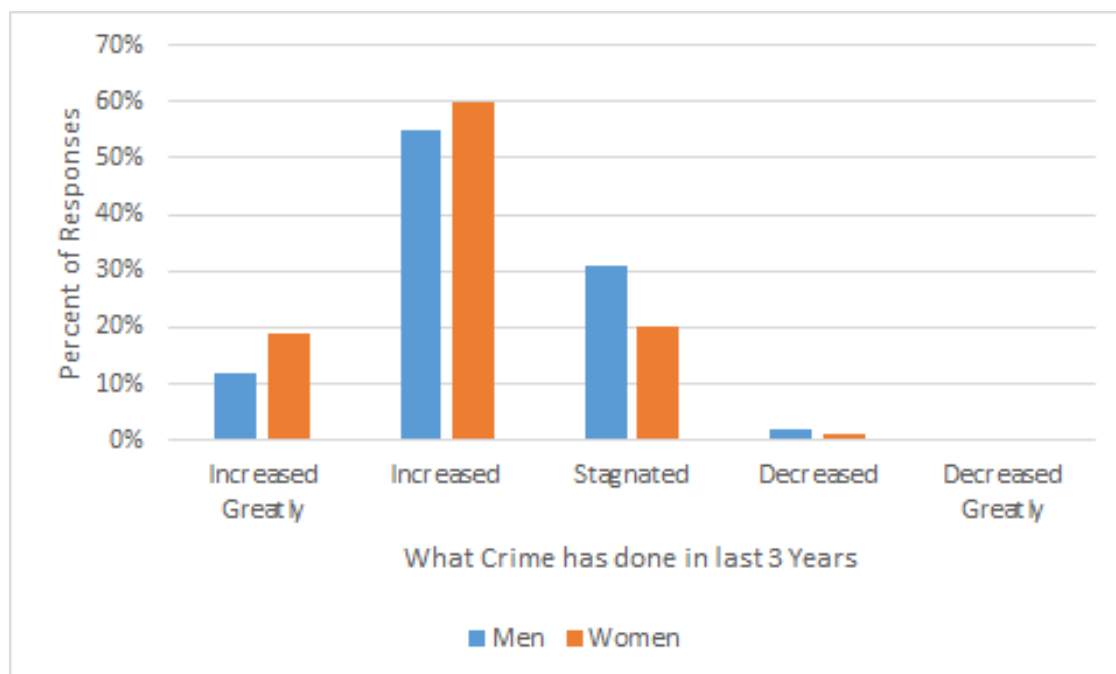


Figure 6.6 Residents perceptions on whether or not crime has increased in the past 3 years

Since it has been established that the people who frequent Keene in their day-to-day lives believe that the city has become more dangerous, what can be done to help people feel safer? Many people said that one of the largest problems in Keene is the aggressive panhandling that continues to occur throughout the town. More than 85% of women and 67% of men agree this is

a large problem in downtown Keene. Another way to make people feel safer might be by increasing the police presence in downtown, as 25% of women said that there was not a strong enough presence of the police force in the downtown area of Keene (Figure 6.7). However, increasing police into the core area may not be a wise use of resources, as the majority of the people surveyed do believe there is already strong police presence.

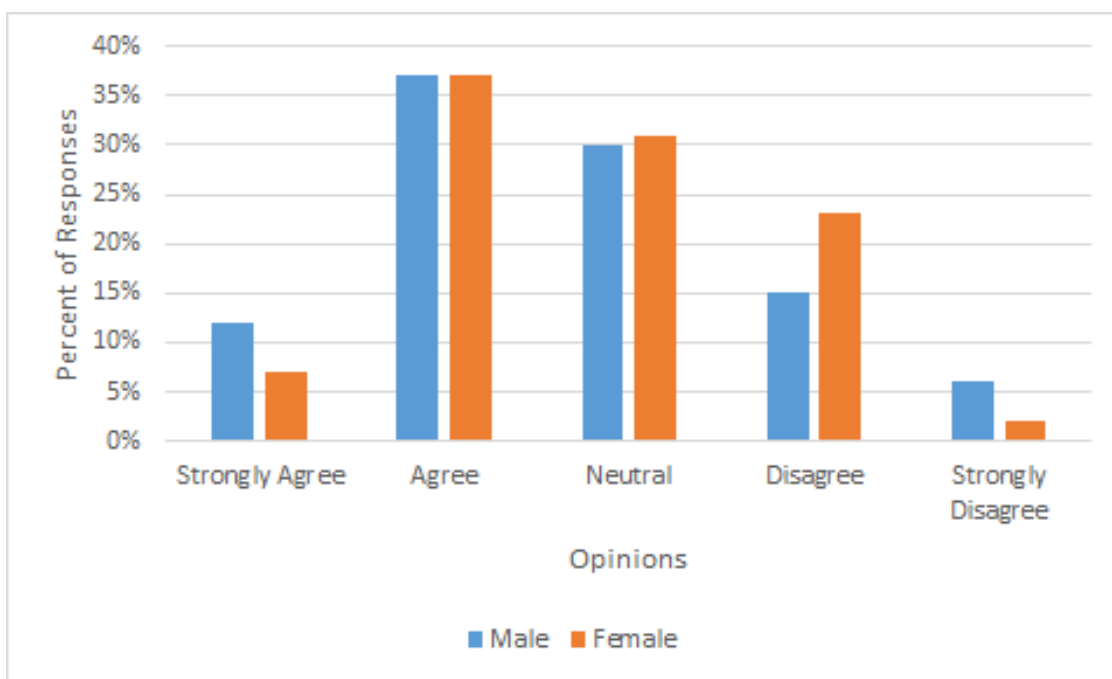


Figure 6.7 *There is a strong police presence in downtown Keene*

Age

Four different age groups were surveyed, ranging from young adults, ages 18 to 24, to those of retirement age, ages 65 and older. Surveying these age groups led to some surprising results, for instance the 18-24-year-old group felt less safe at night than any other age group with 58% of respondents in saying that they felt unsafe at night (Figure 6.8). This age group also felt the least safe during the day with 18% of respondents reporting that they felt unsafe in downtown Keene during the day.

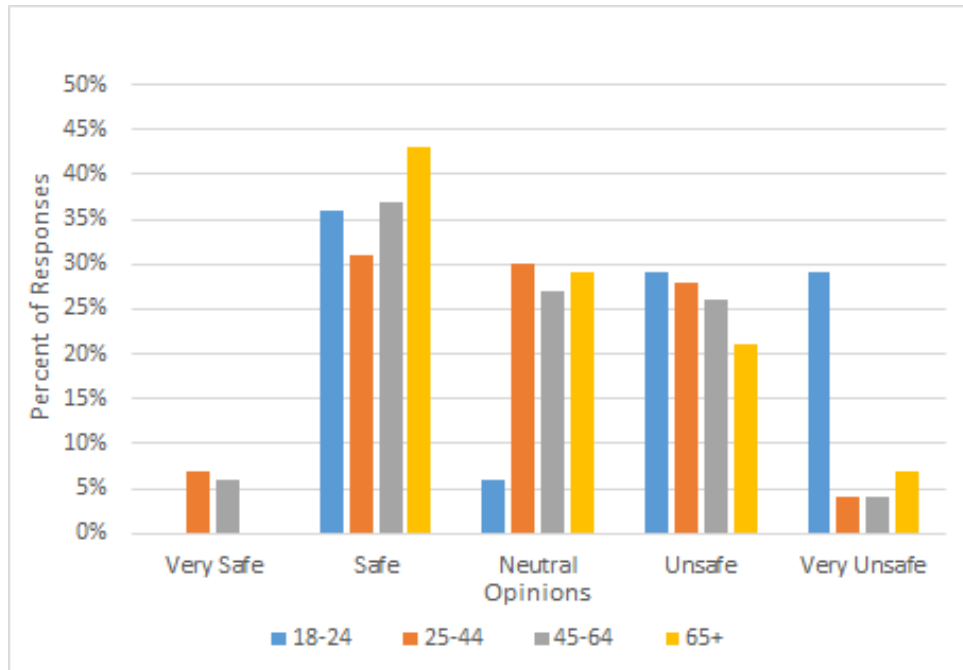


Figure 6.8 Opinions on safety of Keene at night by age group

Young adults are the age group most likely to change their activity in downtown Keene due to their fear of crime that may be occurring. *More than half (59%) of the young adults that were surveyed said that they changed their activities in downtown Keene due to the threat of crime that they perceive to be occurring.* This may have to do with the activities in which young people tend to partake. Attending parties and going to bars can lead to risky behavior and most people do these two things at night when it is dark outside and people are more likely to commit crimes.

For the most part young adults do not fear that they will become victims of crime while in Keene during the next year of their lives. With that being said, a higher percentage of young adults, 30%, think that they are going to be the victim of a crime in the next 12 months than any other age group. This coincides with the responses that were received for the two other questions mentioned above as far as the responses from young adults are concerned. On top of this, 59% of young adults said that the amount of crime that occurs in Keene affects the overall

livability of Keene (Figure 6.9). This may affect the number of young adults seeking to live in the city.

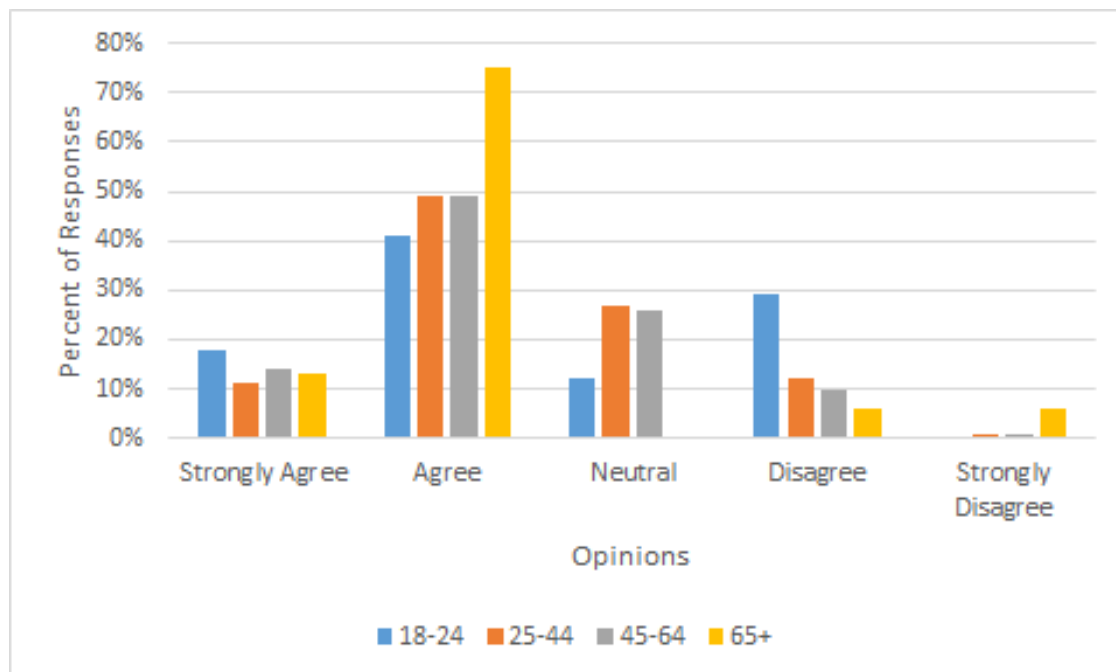


Figure 6.9 Livability of Keene by age group

There is no clear reason as to why young adults in Keene feel unsafe despite these responses. Despite the fact that the younger population seems to feel less safe, 53% agree that crime in Keene has stagnated over the past three years. As such, they are the only age group where less than 50% of respondents perceive an increase in the amount of crime occurring in Keene over the past three years. Young adults also agree that the police presence in downtown Keene is plentiful, as 63% of them agree that police have a strong presence in downtown Keene. Many from this group may not have visited other cities in New Hampshire enough to determine whether or not Keene is comparably safe, as 52% said that Keene was not any more or any less safe than other New Hampshire cities (Figure 6.10).

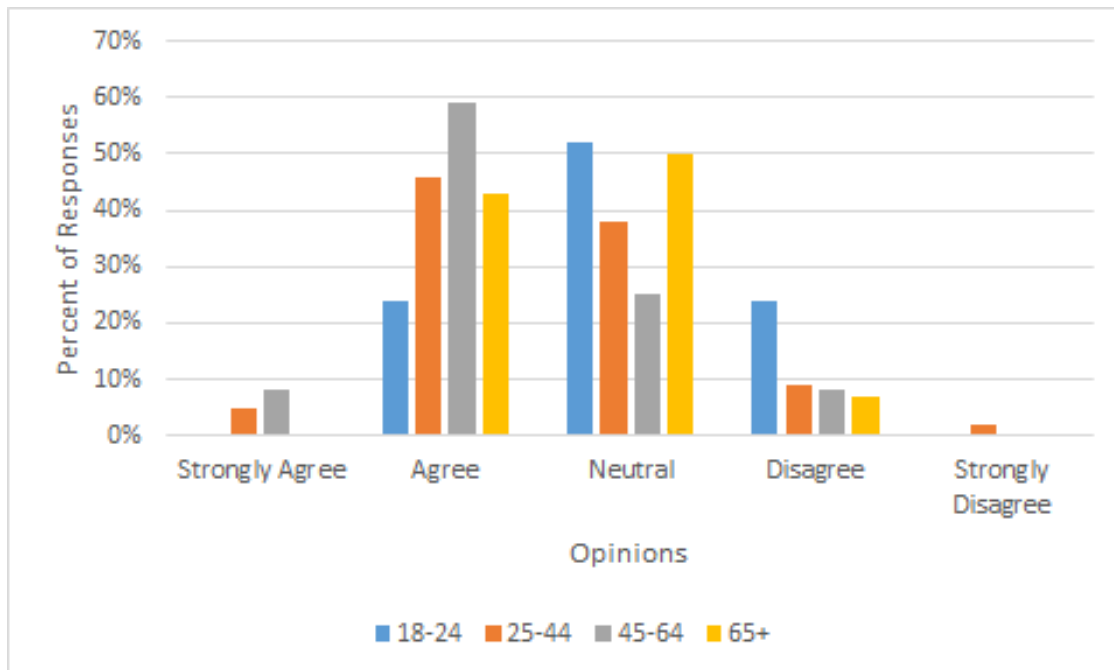


Figure 6.10 *Safety of Keene compared to other New Hampshire cities by age group*

This probably means that young adults in Keene are more involved in areas and activities that would be considered dangerous or risky. Activities such as house parties, binge drinking, and experimental drug use are common at this age range and could cause people to feel unsafe. People within this age range have also generally not travelled much by themselves yet. Travelling with parents affords a sense of security. These young adults have also just recently gotten out of their parents' houses and are taking care of themselves for the first time, which can lead to feelings of insecurity and anxiety, as well as leading to bad decision making.

Open Ended Responses

The survey included a portion in which respondents could make suggestions about how to make the core area safer. Respondents had the ability to mention anything that was not brought up in previous questions or reiterate the importance of any previously mentioned topic. Out of over 200 respondents, 138 put something in this open-ended section. While some mentioned that they felt perfectly safe in the core area, the majority stated aspects that made

them feel unsafe, ways to improve existing problems, or both. The reoccurring themes that seemed to present themselves in these responses are police presence, police presence on foot, homelessness, panhandling, lighting, crosswalks, and drugs.

By an overwhelming margin, the most common topic was police presence, which was mentioned in more than a third of the responses. About half of responses that mentioned police presence talked specifically about police on foot. There were more responses that talked about police on foot than homelessness, panhandling, crosswalks, or drugs. Only lighting was mentioned more than police on foot, though lighting was not mentioned as often as police presence in general. Figure 6.11 shows how many comments mentioned each theme. It is important to remember that these numbers will not add up to the exact 138 respondents that wrote something as some comments mentioned police presence, lighting, and drugs, while other comments made no mention of any of these topics.

Not all suggestions made fell within these categories. Some did not even have very much to do with the safety of the core area at all. Some suggestions included making sure rent was lower, lowering taxes, and more affordable daycare centers. Other suggestions were more relevant but still unique. Suggestions of installing security cameras, stricter enforcement of speed limits, and police on horseback were made, but were few and far between. While lighting was talked about often, many of those responses made suggestions to light up the bike paths in particular. Some responses even contradicted one another. Some suggested that the homeless shelter be closed, while others suggested that more services for the homeless be provided. In addition, some suggested that crosswalks near intersections be eliminated, while others called for better lighting and signage for drivers. Furthermore, responses showed that citizens wanted

to address the opioid epidemic with opposing strategies. One way was to crack down on users and punish them as extensively as legally possible while others claimed there needed to be more resources for them, such as clinics.

Topics in Downtown Safety

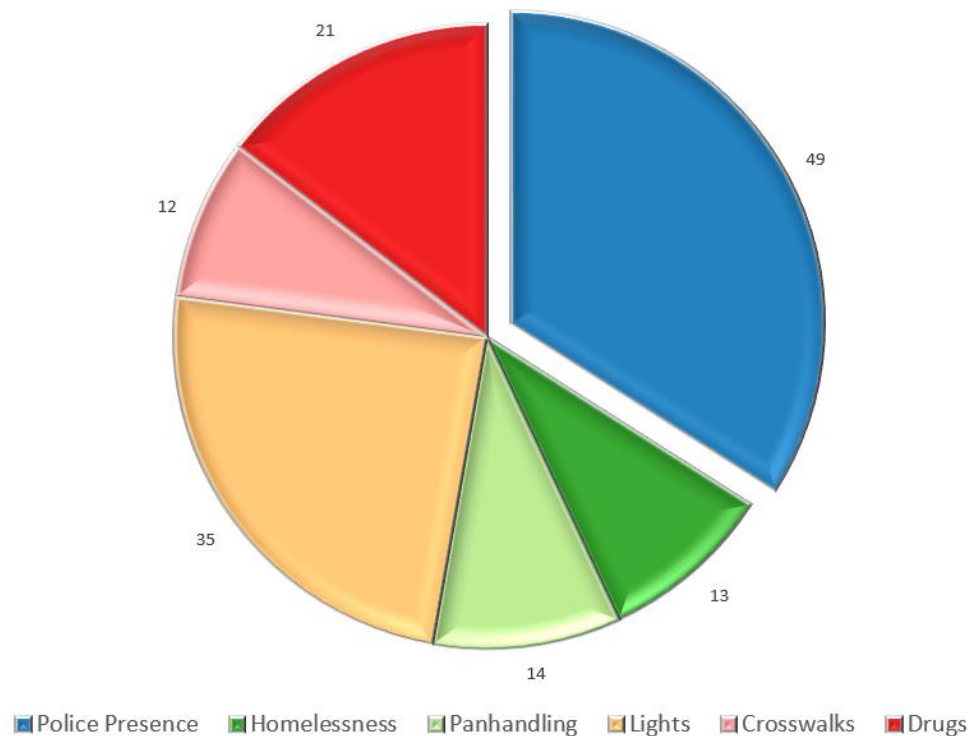
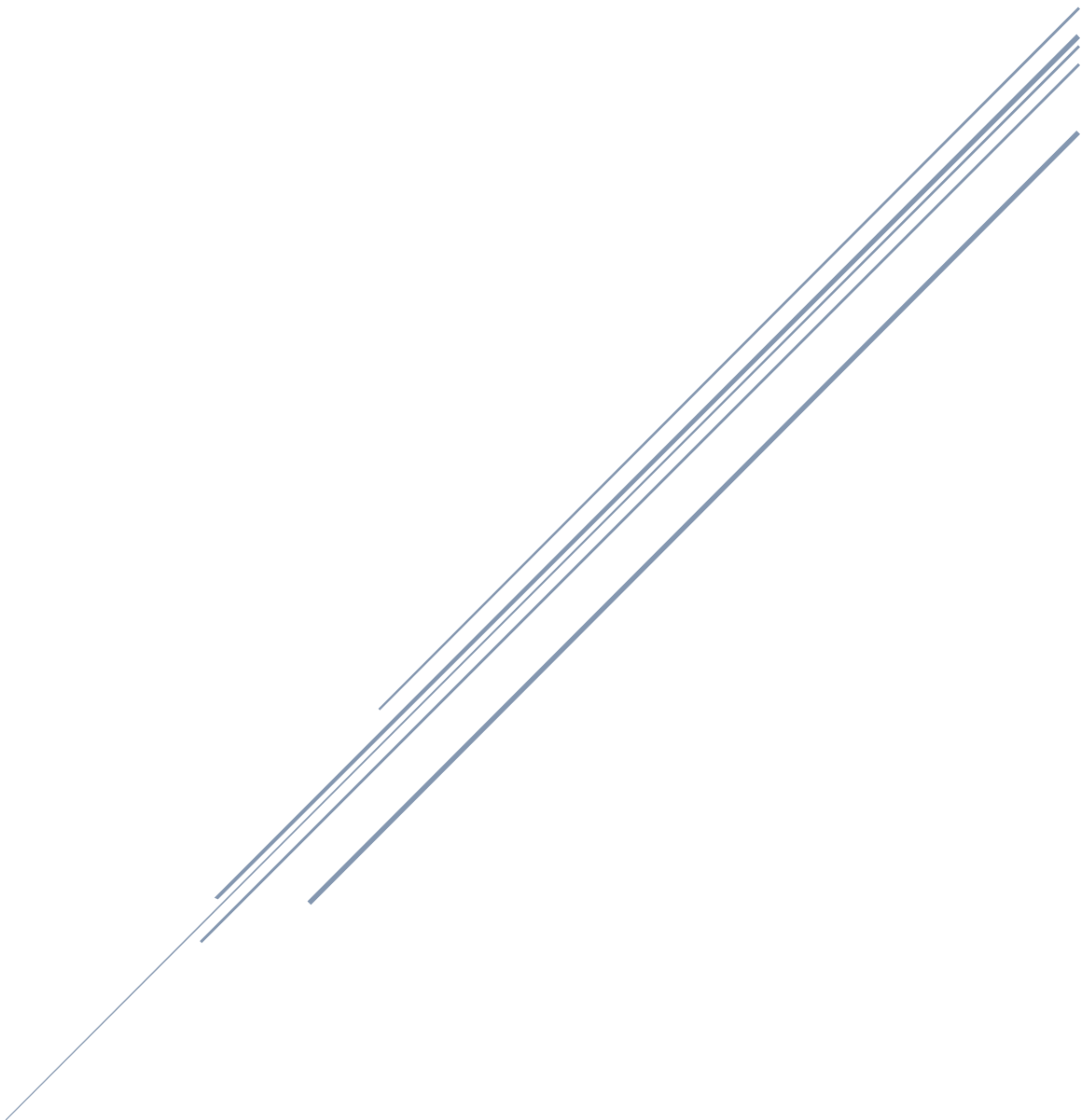


Figure 6.11 Topics in Downtown Safety

While not every suggestion can realistically be fulfilled, spotting trends and common ideas are vital to understanding what changes will be successful and which ones will not. *The prevalent concepts that can be derived from these responses are that an increased amount of police on foot and better lighting where it is lacking are changes that can be realistically implemented that will help the public perceive a safer core area.*

CHAPTER 7

Conclusions



Purpose and Hypotheses

This study determined what areas of Keene are *perceived* as high crime areas and what areas of Keene are *actually* high crime areas. The intent of the study was to work with the Keene Police Department to determine locations in the city that people perceive as fear inducing in comparison to area of actual crime. Perceived crime can negatively affect many facets of the city, such as local businesses, the livability of Keene, and property values. By using primary research and surveying over 200 participants, this study was able to determine which factors of safety affect the core area of Keene. The study was also conducted to determine not only where residents and visitors feel unsafe in Keene, but also demographic variation in response. This is unique information for the City of Keene, because Keene did not previously have much information regarding residents and visitors perceptions of crime. It is hoped that this information will be of use to the Keene Police Department in aiding creation of positive and safe view of the core area of Keene.

Crime and Safety in Keene

Crime and safety in Keene are separate topics that are intrinsically related to each other. In places where there is relatively high crime, there are concerns over safety. Though crime in Keene is not high, many see the core area as relatively unsafe. Perception of crime is attributed to three key characteristics of downtown: homelessness, panhandling, and opioid use. Homeless people are seen as contributors to crime in all cities and The Hundred Nights Shelter in downtown Keene attracts many homeless people from the entire city. The dense population of the core area also contributes to an increase in panhandling. Homeless citizens “are widely viewed... as a

threat to social order who commit crime and create disorder and discomfort among others” (Pain and Francis 2004, 98). While homelessness affects the view of the core area, panhandling is perhaps a more serious issue as it directly affects the citizens and visitors of Keene. Panhandling creates an interaction between two individuals that can cause feelings of insecurity. Individuals who have been approached may feel that they could potentially become victim of a crime. The third characteristic that contributes to the perception of crime is opioid use. With the opioid epidemic growing nationally, a Keene resident may notice the effects of the epidemic while enjoying a stroll down Main Street. This in turn may alter their perception of crime in that area.

Original Research

The survey instrument designed and distributed for this research produced a map results that reveals how survey participants feel in the core area, specifically near Main Street, Railroad Square, and Church Street. Nearly 40% of women who participated in the survey indicated that they have changed their activity in Keene due to fear of crime while only 25% of men who took the survey said the same. Results also indicate that women in Keene have a higher fear of being a victim in the core area than men. Research also indicates that time of day plays a large role in whether an individual feels unsafe in downtown Keene. When there is not ample lighting or sunlight both women and men tend to feel less safe. Results show of both women and men feel relatively safe in downtown Keene during the day. Nearly 90% of men feel safe during the day while 79% of women feel safe during the day. At night, most men still feel safe while only 42% of women reported feeling safe. Overall women feel less safe in Keene than men. The presence of Keene State College contributes to the female population in Keene as the majority of students at Keene State College are female.

This study also suggests that the residents of Keene believe that the quality of life in Keene has been lowered due to crime in the downtown area. Though many participants have this sentiment, it conflicts with the data that indicate crime in Keene has dropped. Opinions are not without merit however, as the core area has experienced increases in homelessness and panhandlers.

Young adults in Keene are the age group most likely to change their activity due to the crime that they perceive to be occurring. Attending parties and going to bars may be the reason these young adults feel the way they do, but the reason as to why young adults feel unsafe in Keene is not entirely clear. Though young adults indicate that they will change their activity due to crime, they do not feel that they will be a victim of crime in the next 12 months.

Interviews with the Fire Chief and Police Chief were conducted and significantly aided the understanding of the causes and consequences of crime within the City of Keene. With the guidance of the Keene Police Department and the Keene Fire Department, this study was able to identify many areas of Keene that were deemed at least potentially unsafe to the participants of the survey. With this information, maps that were made that may be able to relay the information to the Keene Police Department. In turn, KPD will be able to discuss the issues that may have arisen and find a way to combat them so that the residents and visitors of Keene can feel safe at all times of the day and night.

Recommendations

A recommendation for the Keene Police Department is to address the opioid issue by creating a community coalition. Such a coalition of different individuals in Keene could include

school administrators, faith based community leaders, law enforcement, public health professionals, or treatment professionals. Through this contribution of talent, the city may be able to gain insight on many different aspects of the opioid crisis. Coalitions can come together and generate conducting visioning sessions, create and implement action plans, campaigns, and educational sessions. A coalition could also examine ways to stop panhandling and address the amount of homelessness in the core area.

Another recommendation for the Keene Police Department would be to continue to work closely with Keene State College. Due to the fact that mostly young people feel that crime affects their activity in Keene, the young people of Keene should be addressed and educated. With most of the young people in Keene living in the core area, if the police department were to increasing collaboration with the college, the city may be able to understand a more significant reasoning as to why young people feel the need to alter their activities in the core area based on crime. An example of this could be to hold informational sessions discussing crime in Keene and why students should feel safe.

A final recommendation would be to turn Railroad Square, an area of common concern, into something of a satellite police station. This would fundamentally change a space that is consistently making citizens uncomfortable and provide a strong police presence, something many citizens cited as a solution to creating a sense of security. This project could be of considerable expense, but there are other potential solutions with a similar effect at a fraction of the cost. For example, if one of the planters in Railroad Square were to be removed, two or three "police only" parking spaces could be created. This would also bring a police presence to

the same area of concern and guarantee the Keene Police Department a place from which to conduct foot patrols, something many citizens believe would help them feel safer.

Summary and Discussion

This study shows that crime in Keene is a visible problem. Even though it may not affect the lives of all residents or visitors of Keene, crime does affect the majority of people in the core area and how safe they feel at certain times of the day. The issues of homelessness, panhandling and opioid use have altered public perception of safety in the core area. The information gathered by this study will be provided to the City of Keene, the Keene Police Department as well as the Keene Fire Department, in hopes that it helps the residents and visitors in the city feel more safe and secure. The Keene Police Department may well benefit by using the maps created and data collected to aid in changing perception of the City of Keene in regards to crime. We would like to thank Chief Russo for his partnership in this project.

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Appendix

A1 Survey that was distributed to over 200 respondents in Keene

Downtown Keene Safety Assessment Survey

This survey is being conducted by Geography Students at Keene State College in cooperation with the Keene Police and Fire Departments. The purpose of this survey is to gather data on the perception of crime and safety in downtown Keene, New Hampshire.

1. Age: ☐ 18-24 ☐ 25-44 ☐ 45-64 ☐ 65+

2. Gender: _____

3. Do you live in Keene? Yes ☐ No ☐

Please respond to each question by checking the box that corresponds with your answer.

How safe do you feel in downtown Keene during the day?

Very Unsafe	Unsafe	Neutral	Safe	Very Safe
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How safe do you feel in downtown Keene at night?

Very Unsafe	Unsafe	Neutral	Safe	Very Safe
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Keene Police Department has a strong presence in downtown Keene.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The amount of crime that occurs affects the livability of Keene.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Keene is safe compared to other New Hampshire cities.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Aggressive panhandling is an issue in downtown Keene.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The fear of crime has changed my activity in downtown Keene.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I fear that I will become a victim of a crime in Keene, within the next 12 months

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The level of crime in Keene over the last 3 years has:

Decreased Greatly	Decreased	Stayed the Same	Increased	Increased Greatly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. What makes you feel unsafe in Downtown Keene? Select all that apply.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless People | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Lighting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prior Knowledge of the area | <input type="checkbox"/> Drug Use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Panhandlers | <input type="checkbox"/> Amount of Vegetation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cross Walks/Traffic | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Visibility |

5. What do you think could improve your safety in downtown, Keene?

On the map below please identify up to three areas of Keene in which you feel 'unsafe' with an X.

