



Chapter 4

## PUBLIC SAFETY

It takes more than a thriving restaurant scene to sustain DC's recent population boom. New residents also need somewhere to live. Increased demand has driven up the already high cost of homes and rentals and kicked off a surge of new construction. While the city is now prospering, these changes have made DC unaffordable for many residents, both current and new.

High housing costs have helped make DC one of the most expensive places in the country to live. Even at higher-income levels, many renters are paying more than 30 percent of their income on housing and some find homeownership out of reach. Lower-income residents, meanwhile, are getting further priced out of the market. Can the city meet the needs of its new generation of residents while also creating and preserving affordable housing at all income levels?



### Intro text

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### Screen

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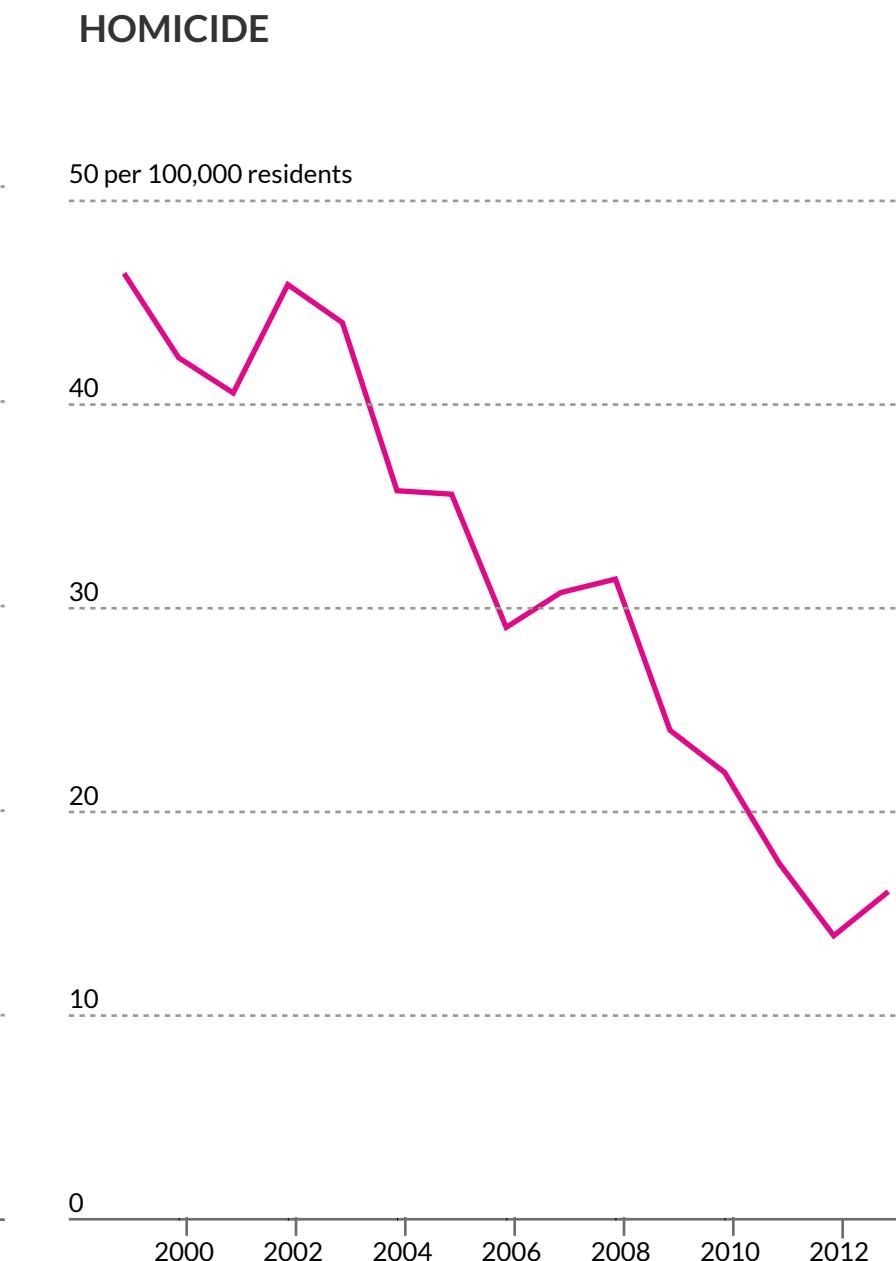
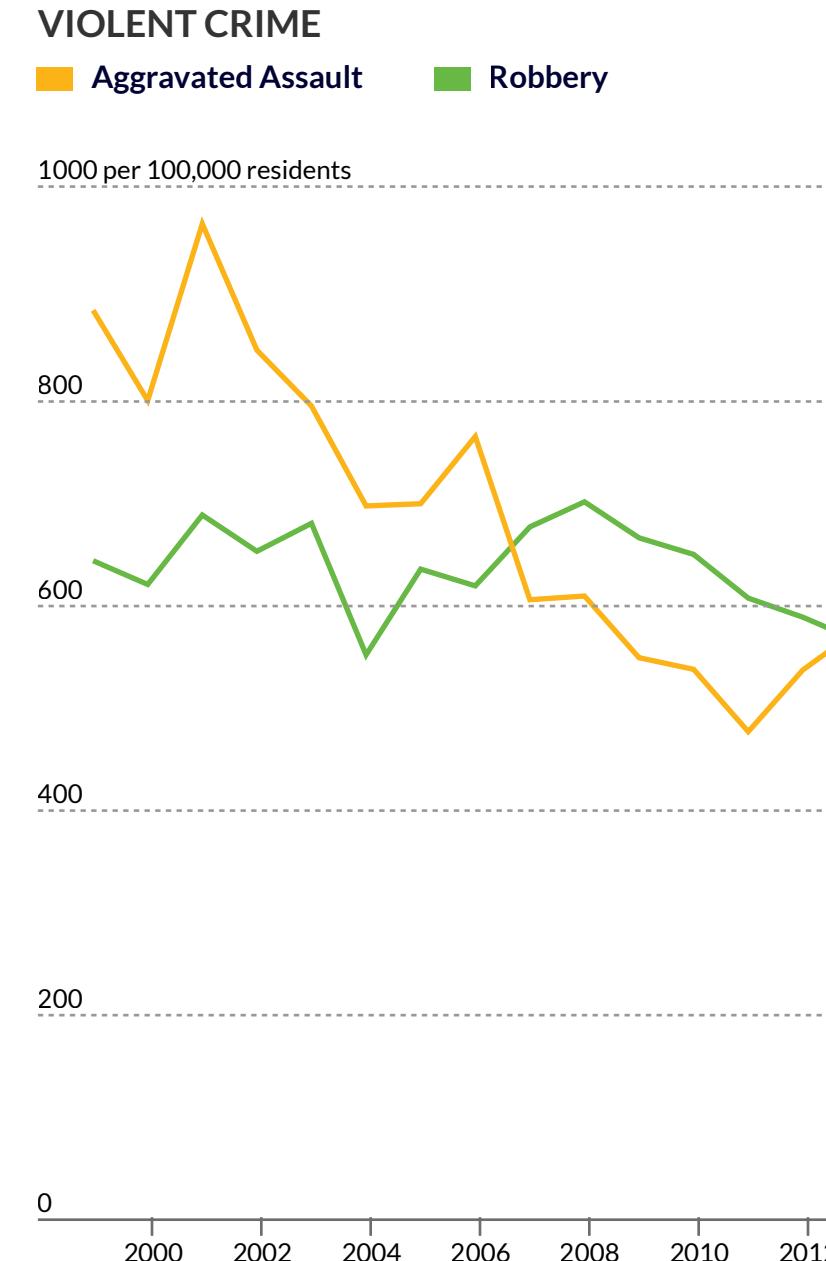


## Violent crime continues falling steadily beyond the 1990s crime drop

Researchers are still figuring out what caused the nationwide drop in violent crime in the mid- to late 90s. DC is a compelling case because it has been particularly successful at extending that crime decline. That success is due in large part to a renewed emphasis on community-oriented policing and evidence-based tactics, as well as changing demographics and economic growth.

DC Police Chief Cathy Lanier has emphasized community engagement by increasing foot patrols, using social media and a tip line to foster community involvement, encouraging more one-on-one interactions between police and residents, and valuing empathy in police recruitment and training.

Lanier has also rejected zero-tolerance and “hot spots” policing, aggressive strategies that combat violent crime by cracking down on minor offenses and flooding high-crime areas with police. The problem with these tactics, Lanier says, is that they alienate residents—who are also often victims and witnesses—and turn them against the police. And when you’re trying to focus on serious



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### Graphic

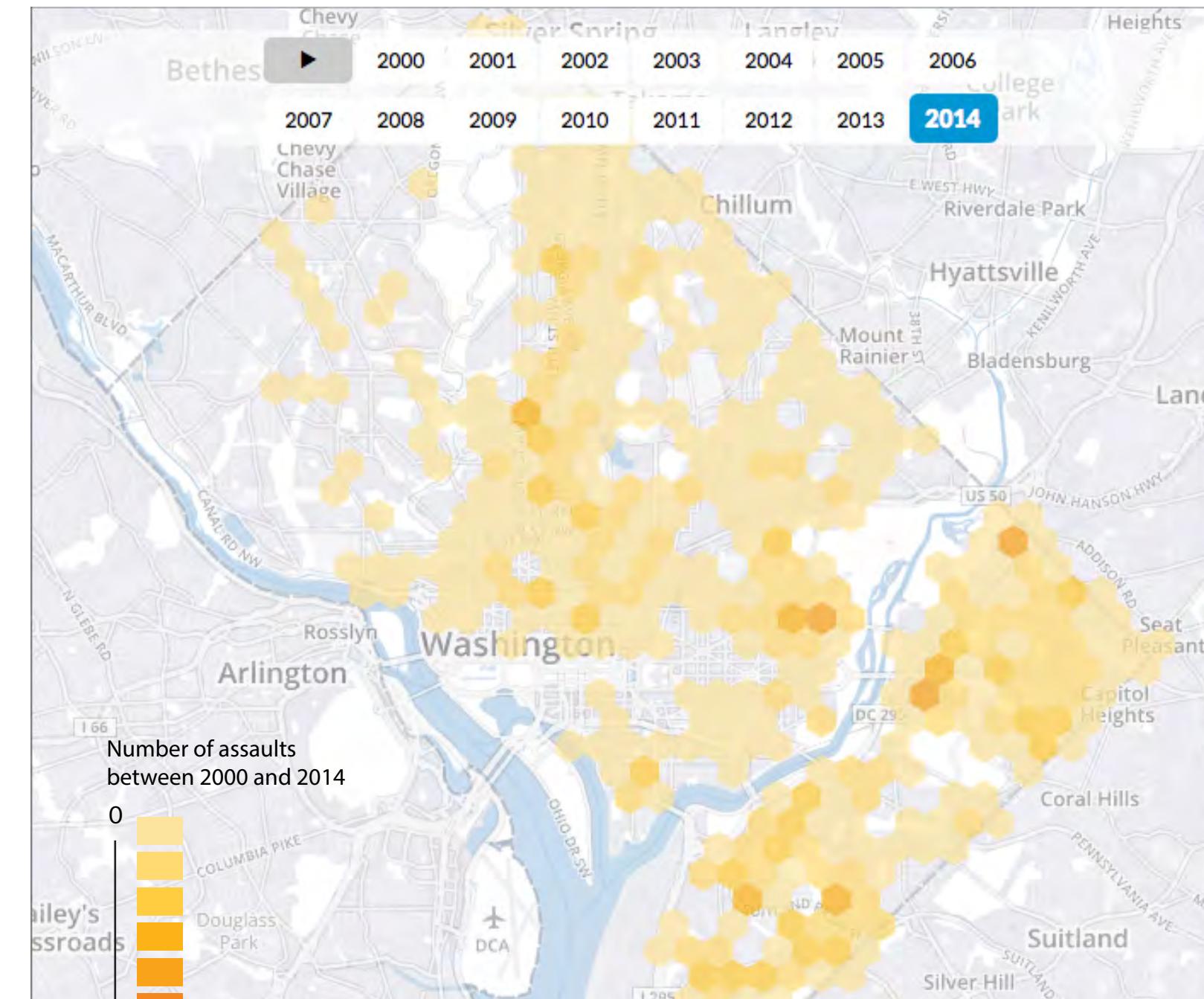
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## Aggravated assaults declined citywide, but remained high in Northeast and Southeast DC

Aggravated assaults are serious physical assaults, often involving a deadly weapon like a gun or knife. The rate of aggravated assaults per 100,000 people in DC fell significantly from 801 in 2000 to 576 in 2013.

However, some areas had smaller declines, particularly in Trinidad, along the H Street Corridor, and in neighborhoods east of the Anacostia River. The population east of the river also remained fairly consistent during this period, meaning that increases (or a lack of decline) in the volume of crime can't be explained by an increase in the number of residents.



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### Map

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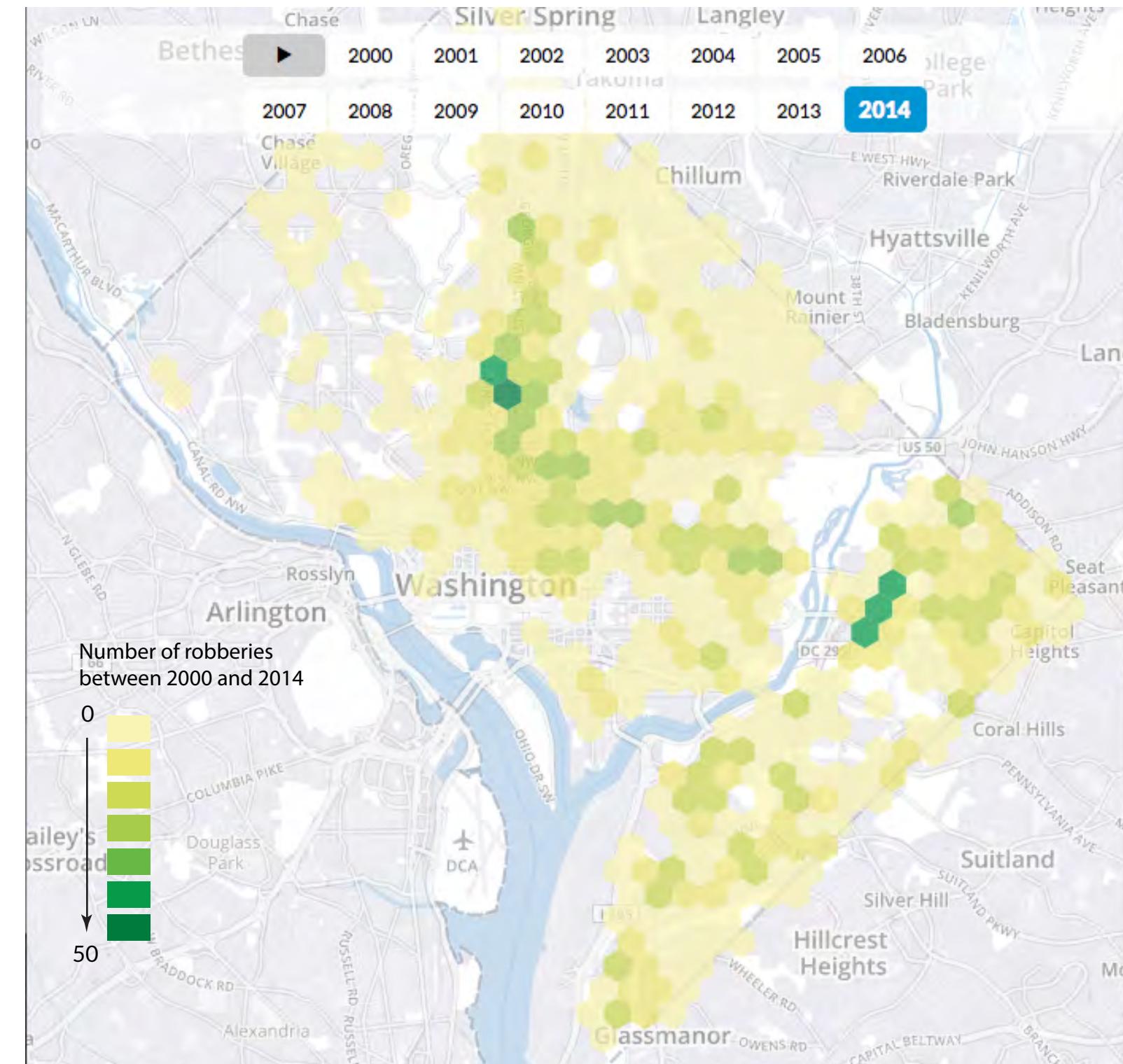
## Robberies follow the trend of other violent crimes

Robberies followed roughly the same path as aggravated assaults, steadily declining in the city overall but remaining fairly stable in some parts of the District. Robberies, where the offender uses or threatens force, are considered violent crimes, while thefts like pickpocketing are not.

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## Which neighborhoods had the biggest decreases in violent crime?

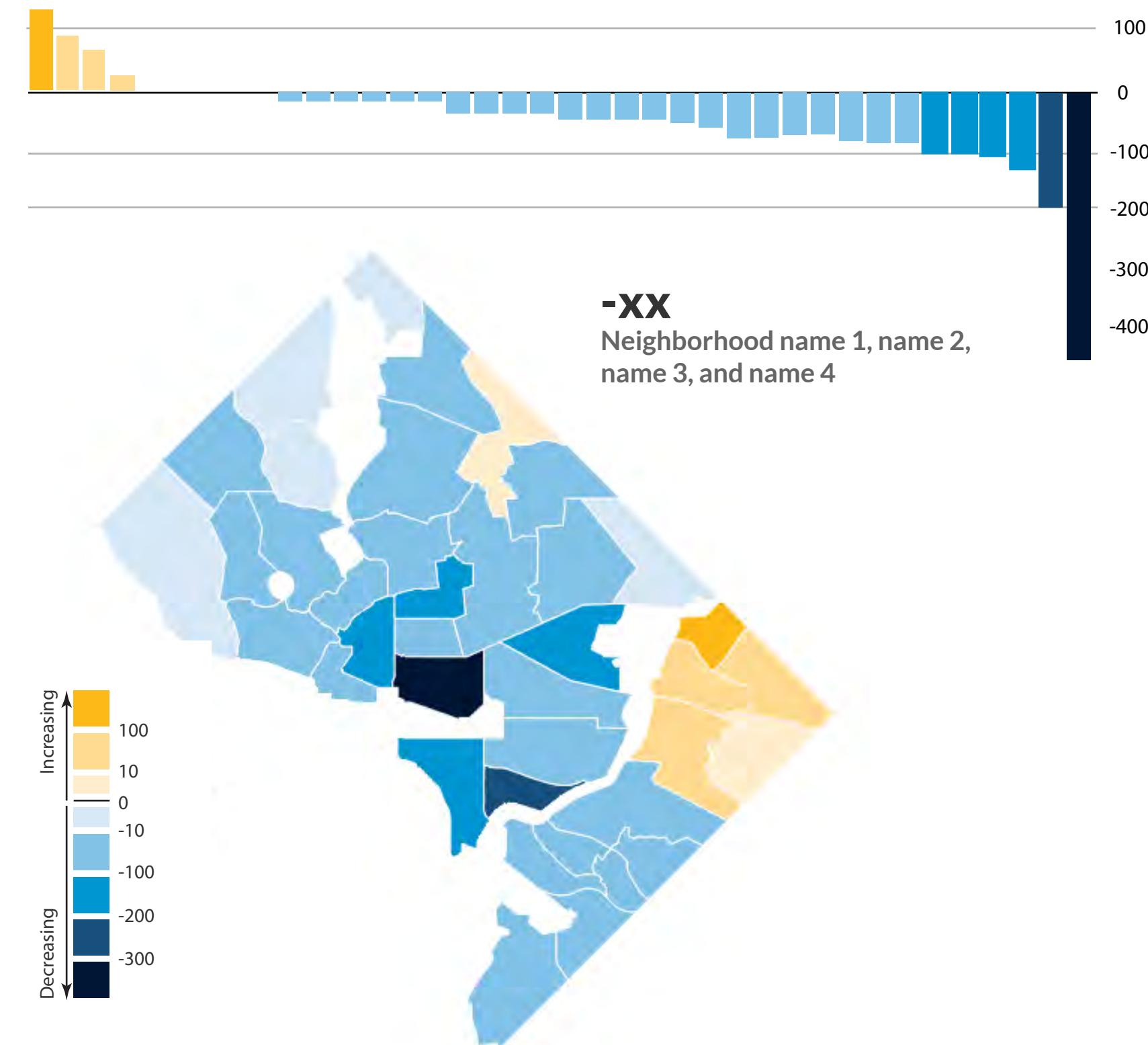
Looking at violent crime by neighborhood cluster, we can see that the biggest drop in crime occurred in the Chinatown/Penn Quarter area. From 2000 to 2014, the rate of violent crime fell from 63 crimes for every 1,000 residents to 17. The violent crime rate also fell considerably in the Navy Yard area, one of DC's fastest-growing neighborhoods.

During the same period, while crime was declining citywide, the violent crime rate increased slightly in four adjacent neighborhood clusters in Ward 7: Eastland Gardens/Kenilworth, Deanwood/Lincoln Heights, Mayfair/Hillbrook, and River Terrace/Benning.

Measuring crimes per residents allows us to compare neighborhoods of different sizes, but it's also important to note that these four Ward 7 neighborhoods have much smaller populations and lower raw crime numbers than Chinatown. For example, in 2014, the Kenilworth area had roughly 2,450 residents and experienced 63 violent crimes, while the Chinatown area was home to some 13,600 residents and experienced 234 violent crimes.

Many areas saw little to no change in the violent crime rate over the past 15 years. Stable crime levels can mean very different things. Several neighborhood clusters in upper northwest DC, for example, started out with a very low crime rate and have maintained it, while other neighborhoods have higher crime rates that remain unchanged.

### CHANGE IN VIOLENT CRIME PER 10,000 RESIDENTS



#### Graphic

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## Building on DC's public safety improvements will take more than policing alone

The crime-reduction strategies that have taken DC to this point won't be enough to take us the next level. Many of the remaining aggravated assaults and homicides involve issues like domestic violence, which cannot be addressed by policing alone. To tackle the new face of crime in DC, we'll need a holistic approach that involves social services, the police, nonprofits, and residents working together. Only by partnering can the city build healthier, safer communities—creating the social supports, stability, and opportunities that will bring down even the most persistent pockets of violent crime.



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*Written by Samuel Bieler, Elizabeth Pelletier, and Serena Lei  
Research by Elizabeth Pelletier, Samuel Bieler, and Nancy La Vigne  
Design and development by Christina Baird and Hannah Recht  
Photos by*

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